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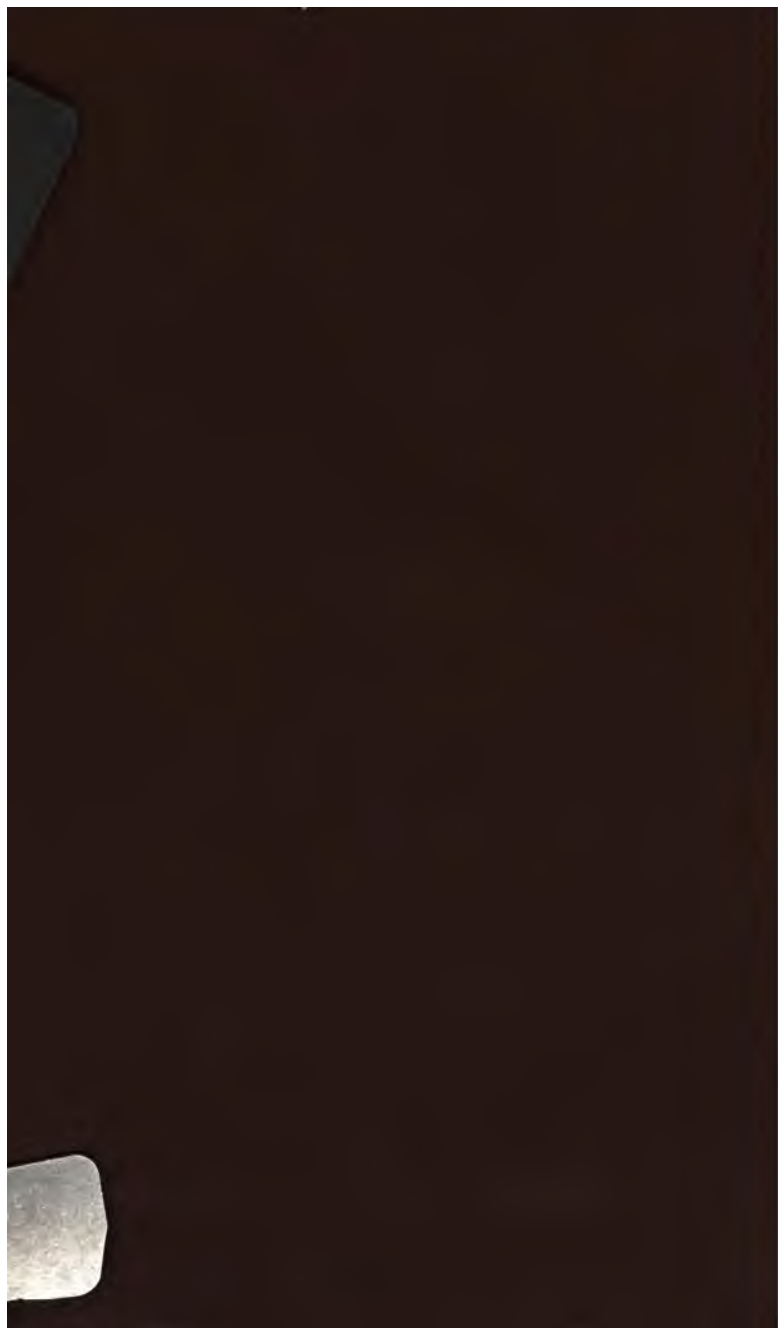


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HOBBES

THOMAS HOBBS

LEONARD M. HARRIS, JR., M.A., D.Phil.





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HUBBUB.

A STORY.

BY

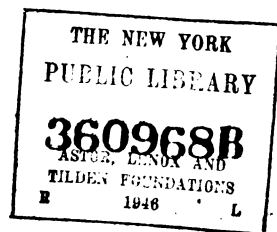
EMMA C. CURRIER.

"Have we not all, amid life's petty strife,
Some pure ideal of a noble life,
That once seemed possible? Did we not hear
The flutter of its wings, and feel it near,
And just within our reach? It was. And yet
We lost it in this daily jar and fret,
And now live idle in a vain regret.
But still our place is kept, and it will wait.
Ready for us to fill it, soon or late:
No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always may be what we might have been."

ADELAIDE PROCTOR.



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TO
THE ONE EARNEST FRIEND,
WHOSE NEVER-FAILING ENCOURAGEMENT AND HELP
HAS NERVED ME TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THIS WORK,
I LOVINGLY DEDICATE THIS BOOK.
TRUSTING THAT ITS RECORDS MAY FIND AN
ANSWERING ECHO IN MANY A LIFE, AND AWAKEN AN
EARNEST DESIRE FOR THAT WHICH
IS HIGHER AND BETTER.

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HUBBUB.

CHAPTER I.

THE ISLAND HOME.

THE hot tropical sun shone with all its blazing splendor, and a hush seemed to have fallen upon the great world of nature ; the flowers blossomed without even a breeze to diffuse their fragrance, while the tall Cocoa trees were motionless, and threw gaunt shadows on the hot and dusty street.

Our story opens in one of the many little islands belonging to the West Indies. The city was built on hills and very beautiful it was even in this glaring heat if one had been possessed of strength sufficient to venture forth and admire the picturesque appearance it presented. The harbor was a lovely one, and flags of different nations floated from the various crafts lying at anchor there ; on either side, and, stretching away down as far as the eye could reach, were green hills, some lofty and some of smaller dimensions. On two of the most eminent of these stood two weird-looking old castles, erected so long ago that no one knew their origin. They were supposed, however, to have been

built by pirates who infested the high seas many years since, and were named by some one, whom history does not now recall, respectively, "Bluebeard's and Blackbeard's castles."

The city presented a quaint appearance, with its many-colored houses, — pink, yellow, pearl, and stone-color, — all blending harmoniously. The roofs of these same dwellings were even more delicate in tint and closely resembled the leaves of an autograph album. As you enter the harbor, you behold the houses, one above another, as the land gradually rises, so that almost every house appears to good advantage. Directly in front of the harbor, and upon the highest eminence overlooking the entire place, stands the governor's sumptuous residence ; consequently this hill is called "Government Hill."

Follow the winding road which leads past this elegant abode, and the first house, just a little farther down the hill, is the one to which we will now introduce you. Follow me up the broad stone stairs, which lead to a spacious balcony built of the same enduring material. You need not fear the old dog, who is stretched so lazily in the shadiest corner, for we are old friends and he will not move.

The broad-spreading doors are thrown back to their widest capacity, that not one cooling breeze shall be lost. Looking over the substantial railing which encloses this cool resort, the first thing to which your eyes turn longingly is the fountain, in the centre of which is a marble deer, with its head thrown back as if

in the last struggle, while the water pours in ceaseless streams from its mouth. Oh, that laughing, sparkling water; how musical it sounds as it splashes back into the basin, sending showers of spray in all directions. Around it grow the loveliest flowers, trailing vines, and rare shrubs, twining and blending in beautiful confusion. In one corner of the yard stands a large orange tree, laden with buds and blossoms, oranges lusciously ripe, and oranges green. A rustic seat stands under the old tree, and on it, half open, lies a volume, and the letters are printed in such glittering characters that you have no trouble in discovering the title, "Robinson Crusoe." A hedge of oleanders enclose the entire grounds, and looks like a wall of beauty with its fragrant blossoms. But looking far over the hedge, beyond the road paved with cobble stones, and over the lovely green trees growing on lower ground beneath us, we look beyond the limits of the city, and away down the harbor, where the water looks green along the shore, reflecting the hills against whose foundation it dashes, taking with it rich and spicy perfumes back to the old salt ocean. Sometimes, in fact not infrequently, fierce storms visit this lovely place, and the trees bow to the hurricane and are snapped like the most brittle thing in its fury. One would not think this laughing, sunny water, so still in the hush of this breathless day, could ever grow so tempestuous, or dashing against these mountains seem to dispute their right to an existence, and threaten by all the power that water can command to undermine them. But for years this struggle has been going on

and still the glorious old hills are master of the situation. And as the water laps lovingly against them to-day, you would not dream that there had ever existed any enmity between land and water.

But let us turn our backs on this brilliant prospect and enter the room at whose portals we have so long lingered. The room is large and airy, and so much higher than most rooms that you feel for a moment almost as if you were in a church. A glittering chandelier hangs from the centre of the room, whose dazzling glass pendants catch each little ray of light and reflects rainbow tints on the wall, and also on the sunny hair of the lady, who reclines in an airily-constructed easy chair. Costly pictures adorn the walls, and the furniture of the room is in strict keeping with the heat of the climate. A cool straw matting on the floor is relieved by occasional mats of great brilliancy of color and differing designs.

The marble table in the centre of the room is strewn with books and papers. A delicate shell-work box stands open on a little stand near the lady's chair, and the lace on which she has been at work has fallen in filmy masses to the floor.

The lady was perhaps a little past thirty-five. Hers was a face of rare purity and sweetness of expression, but sickness and recent sorrow were clearly to be traced in every delicate lineament. She was dressed in white, but the black ribbon at her throat bespoke some recent bereavement. Her eyes were closed, but she was evidently not asleep, for a dear voice calling "Mamma"

made the lady open her eyes and she smiled sweetly on the face of the speaker, a little girl of nine summers. She was a pretty child, with dark gray eyes and masses of golden-brown hair; her features were regular and delicate, but there was an expression of maturity in the little face remarkable in one so young. The child answered the mother's inquiring look, by quickly climbing to one arm of her chair, and throwing a pair of dimpled snow-white arms around the lady's neck. She pressed kiss after kiss upon her forehead, eyes, and lips. "Mamma," — and this time the eager childish voice trembled, — "there's a rainbow in your hair, and, as I was playing all alone, trying to be so still because I thought you were asleep, I looked up and the rainbow was all across your hair. You looked just like an angel, just like the picture of Christ's Mother you showed me, with the rays of light all around her, and when I asked about it you said it was a halo of glory." Here the voice of the child grew husky, and she vainly tried to keep back the tears.

The mother tried to soothe her by explaining the cause of the rainbow. Suddenly the sweet, melting expression of the child's face gave place to one of infantile rage, and springing from her mother's loving arms she darted to the floor, and with clenched fist, she almost screamed, and yet the voice was deep with uncontrollable passion. "If you die I shall hate God. I cannot help it! He took my only brother Harry from us, and now O, Mamma, Mamma!" and throwing herself on her knees by her mother's side, she burst into a flood of tears.

The pale face of the mother grew, if possible, a shade paler, and her beautiful blue eyes filled with tears, as she reached forth and clasped her little girl close to her heart. "Edie, darling, do not speak so ; it breaks my heart," she said. In an instant the little white arms of the child were around the mother's neck and she was begging, between sobs and tears, to be forgiven. After the little one's grief had subsided and she had gone laughingly back to her play, her gentle mother pondered anxiously about her darling's future. Mrs. Lyton, accompanied by her two children, had left the home of her youth, far away amidst the hills of old New England, to join her husband, Captain Lyton, who, after following the seas for a number of years, had settled in business on this island, with the most flattering prospects. Two months of uninterrupted happiness followed the arrival of his family, when Edith was stricken with fever, and lay for days hovering between life and death ; hardly had she recovered when the dreadful disease fastened upon her little brother Harry, a sweet little fellow of five years. So, a short time before my story begins, Harry had been borne from their midst, leaving a desolate home for father, mother, and little sister. Edith was naturally of a warm-hearted, impulsive temperament, quick to enjoy and quick to suffer, and possessing, in short, just those elements which might make her a power for good or evil. It was not strange that her loving mother looked forth into the possibilities of that young life with apprehension. Mrs. Lyton possessed an intensely sensitive organization, both physi-

cally and mentally. Long years of ill health had made her feel many times that her life would be a short one. There were depths in the nature of her little girl she could not sound. But she believed that nothing but love and gentleness would mould the child into a noble woman.

The shadows begin to lengthen, and the sultry air grows fragrant, as the dew falls on the flowers. The still water of the harbor breaks into gentle ripples as the evening breeze sweeps over it.

"Papa is coming!" and away springs Edith to meet him.

Captain Lyton is a man of medium height, with broad shoulders and strongly built frame, with eyes not unlike those of his child, that talk with every changing thought, and, after you have studied his face, and furthermore his character, you are not at a loss to know how the child became possessed of such an extreme nature. Unlike Edith's, his hair is black, waving back from a finely shaped forehead; his complexion is dark and sunburnt, which, to almost any observer, would prove an index to the life of danger and adventure he had passed. His mouth gave such a decided expression to his face, that I should give but an imperfect idea of the man, if I omitted this most characteristic feature. It was firm, almost stubborn in its inflexible lines, and Edith had learned, when a little child, to obey her father the first time he spoke. There was one person in the world that Captain Lyton never addressed with an air of command; and this was his wife. It always seemed to Edith

that papa's voice sounded so sweet when he said, "Ella," and older heads thought so too.

The death of his only boy had been a severe blow, and his face still showed traces of grief. With an effort at cheerfulness, he pinched Edie's cheek and bent to kiss the little mouth so temptingly held up to him. Mrs. Lyton gave orders for the tea to be served on the balcony, for it was their favorite custom to sip their tea and watch the ever-changing harbor. The sun had set in all its blazing splendor, as the old cannon at the fort gave warning. The harbor was waking to life once more; gay little sail boats glided here and there, while an occasional sail could be seen of some inward bound vessel.

This was the last night father, mother, and child were ever to spend together; and long years after was every trifling word and action treasured in the heart of little Edith. How she gathered the loveliest flowers and placed them in mamma's lap, while she twined the fairest ones in her hair; and how almost ethereal her mother looked in her fading beauty, as, crowned with flowers, she smiled sweetly on the face of the little artist who adorned her.

"I must run down into the yard once more, mamma," said Edith, "I want just one more rose-bud to put with this spray of orange blossoms, and when I have pinned it at your throat, you will look lovely."

The moonlight, pure and clear, illuminated the whole city, and you who have never felt the intoxication of a tropical moonlight, can hardly appreciate the raptures of that child-heart, so filled with all this wonderful

beauty. She could hardly talk, and snatches of song died on her lips. Long, slanting rays of silver light fell across the water, and seemed to those childish eyes like a long, glorified pathway, which should end nowhere but at the golden gates of the New Jerusalem. All beautiful things pass quickly, so this blessed evening, with its never-ending memories, passed away.

The next day mamma was ill, but not seriously so, and Edith installed herself head nurse, and stayed in the darkened room all day, until the shadows of evening began to gather, and the nurse papa sent, arrived. Another day passed wearily away, and still the improvement the doctor strongly promised, came not; and yet another day, when a terrible fear stole into the child's heart. Going to her own room, she tried to think, but her thoughts were so confused, and this great fear struggling at her heart seemed to stifle her; she fell upon her knees and tried to pray, but the words died on her lips, and the very beating of her own heart seemed to her overstrung nerves, like the tolling of a funeral bell. Then she wandered into the yard and felt almost displeased that God's beautiful world should sympathize so little with her sorrow. She would go gently into her mother's room, and stealing to her bedside, would watch the pale, thin face, and listen to the quick, short breathing, until it seemed as if her heart would break. Mrs. Lyton had been sick nearly two weeks now, and because the ravages of the disease had been so gradual the doctors had been deceived. But now they could close their eyes no longer to the dreaded fact, and Doctor

Prato said to Captain Lyton, after he had counselled with one of the most eminent physicians of the city, "I am sorry for you, Captain Lyton, but we have done all that human skill can do, and it has been in vain. Your wife is dying."

Captain Lyton bent in agony over his precious wife. Would she know him before she died? Would she call his name once more? The drops of perspiration stood almost as thickly on the strong man's brow, as the death-sweat gathered on the face of her he loved. At last she spoke his name; in an instant he was bending over her.

"Henry, do you think that I am dying?"

He could not speak, but gently raised her little delicate hand, on which the death-seal was set, so she could see it.

A beautiful smile broke over her wasted face as she looked into the face of her husband. "Don't grieve so, I am only going home; and if it were not for leaving you and Edith, I should be so happy." "I was dreaming just now, and I thought my darling baby boy — our little Harry — came to me, and sung that beautiful little hymn he used to sing so sweetly,

" 'We're going to the land all laden with perfume,
Where the grass is ever green and the flowers are in bloom.' "

"Henry, you will always love our little girl when I am gone. Never let anything come between you, and be father and mother, both to her!"

Captain Lyton answered in a choking voice, "I will try. But Ella, shall I call Edie?"

"No, Henry; I kissed her good-night, and felt then that we were parting for the last time in this earthly life, and why should she awaken yet to a sense of her great sorrow. Edith has never had a thought I have not shared, and my death will be very hard for her to bear, so you must forget yourself for my sake, and comfort her. Raise me in your arms, Henry; I cannot breathe," she said in a whisper.

The husband gently raised her, and with a smile of angelic sweetness, she passed from time into eternity.

It was, as the gentle instincts of the mother had foreseen, a terrible thing to witness Edith's grief. Father and friends who had come with their kindly sympathy in this hour of trouble, and the servants, who underneath their dark skins, have such warm hearts, all vied with each other to soothe the little one's anguish. At last she grew calm and almost womanly in her grief, and even when she bent over that open coffin, and pressed her lips for the last time to the marble lips of her who slept so peacefully, unmindful of her darling's anguish, — Edith was calm. When dark hands bore that still form forth from the hearts which had loved her so well, and over which she had shed the halo of an almost holy life, Edith made no outburst of grief. But over Edith Lyton's life there had fallen a terrible shadow

CHAPTER II.

THE FATHER'S SECRET.

It was a lovely day, and all nature seemed to be exulting in its own loveliness, when the steamship *Genrusia* swept gracefully down the harbor. The city was soon far away. Bluebeard's and Blackbeard's castles looked like mere specks in the distance. Poor little Edith Lyton was watching the far-away prospect with streaming eyes and aching heart. Captain Lyton's face, too, is turned towards the island they are leaving, and thoughts too sad for utterance are surging over him. At length with a great effort,—for Capt. Lyton was a man of few words, especially so, when any matter weighed heavily on his mind,—he turned his attention to his little motherless girl.

"The water looks pretty as the big wheel makes it foam, does it not, Edie?"

"Yes, papa ; but I was not thinking of the water."

"Well, what then was my little girl thinking about?"

"Oh, so many things," and her lip quivered. "I was thinking for one thing about myself, and where I was going to live, and wondering if you were going to live with me."

"Papa would gladly live with you, darling, but he cannot leave his business, you know ; so I am going to put you at a good school, where I hope you will make rapid progress in your studies, and be able to join me in

a few years; for I shall be very lonely without my little girl."

This conversation occurred some four weeks after Mrs. Lyton's death, on the day when Captain Lyton and Edith embarked for the United States. After one week of sky and water, with a little seasickness for Edith, Captain Lyton and his little girl crossed the plank of the steamer and stepped once more on the shores of the Great Republic. They spent a few days in the bustling city of New York, during which time Captain Lyton did his uttermost to entertain and amuse his child, and when all arrangements were completed, they started for the smaller city, where Edith was to attend school.

Edith's teacher, Miss Sullivan by name, lived in an old-fashioned red brick house, which, with its imposing front door, and stone steps guarded by an iron railing either side, to say nothing of the immense door-plate, gave a look of dignity to the place, which, to one beholding it for the first time, was almost appalling.

When Edith stood by her father's side, waiting to be admitted into the mysterious house we have just described, her feelings were almost indescribable. "Would Miss Sullivan be as dignified as her house looked? Would she love little girls?" Her reflections were cut short, for the doors swung back as ordinary doors are wont to do, and they were shown into a pleasant-looking parlor, by a very stout, red-faced servant girl. Edith had little time to examine the room or its various articles of interest, for the door quickly opened and a lady entered. She was tall, with a very pleasant face and

deep blue eyes. Her black hair was thickly threaded with silver, which seemed to be the result of a tendency to grow gray young, rather than the result of years; for she was scarcely more than thirty.

"I am happy to meet you, Captain Lyton," she said, taking his proffered hand, and at the same time extending her other hand to Edith. "This is the little pupil whom you wrote me concerning?"

Captain Lyton assented, and after giving various directions concerning the child, he kissed Edith tenderly and took his departure.

Miss Sullivan, the preceptress, was the eldest of five sisters, all unmarried; so Edith who had never lived in a large family before, found herself one among a large number. There was a lad some twelve years old there; he was a Cuban by birth, and had thus early been sent from home and friends that he might acquire perfectly the English language; his name was Gonzalo Turado. At the time Edith entered the family, Gonzalo could not say anything in English but the few words, "Put it down there;" so, as this was the extent of his English, "Put it down there" was used for everything.

Whether it was a similarity of circumstances, or a genuine love of mischief, which made Gonzalo and Edith fast friends, we do not know; but certainly, with both of them Miss Sullivan had more trouble than with the rest of her school.

Edith soon became a favorite with all; she was first and foremost in all mischievous plots and was ever the one to fall into disgrace, and yet in her very mischief

she was lovable : if it had been any child but Edie one would have wanted to shake her soundly ; but some way whatever Edith did was just a little different from what any one else would think to do, and so they let it pass.

On Saturdays there was no school, and Miss Sullivan made the little girls learn to sew, and also a long lesson in the catechism.

One Saturday, after Edith had been an inmate of Miss Sullivan's school for six months, she was vainly trying to learn a tediously long lesson in the catechism ; her darning had been done very poorly that morning, and she felt a trifle fretful over the scolding she had just received in regard to it. Gonzalo's black eyes peeped into the window, and with his hand like a trumpet over his mouth, he whispered in a voice so loud that it reached the ears of the teacher, " Put it down there."

Miss Sullivan frowned upon the intruder, and he disappeared behind the lilac-bush : just then Edith wished she was Spanish, or almost any other nationality, so she need not study that stupid old book. Again Gonzalo creeps noiselessly to the window, and makes all kinds of signs to her, intending doubtlessly to hurry her in the lesson. At last she managed to hobble through it, with some help from Miss Sullivan, and was excused by that lady from further work or studies, and away she flew to join Gonzalo.

Not far from the school was a lovely stretch of country, and to this, their favorite resort, they repaired with several of the little girls who were Miss Sullivan's pupils also. What a delightful time they enjoyed, gathering

flowers and wading in the brook. Edith delivered an address to her little band of admiring hearers, and to close up the afternoon's amusement Gonzalo and Edith succeeded in tumbling into the brook, and had to wend their way home in a dripping condition, much to the delight of all except Miss Sullivan, who was extremely disgusted and sent both of the offenders supperless to bed.

Had Edith forgotten her dear mother and little brother in this new whirl of life? Oh, no. Many times when all alone she would shed blinding tears, and sometimes from the depths of her keen anguish she would cry, "O, mamma! mamma! no one ever loved me as you did; I cannot live without you," and then, exhausted by the struggle, she would grow calm again, and no one but God knew the loneliness of the motherless child.

She used to write to her father very often, and was sometimes reproved gently by him for misspelled words, and often cautioned not to forget her mother; and the child would think bitterly, "Does he suppose I can forget all that made life worth the living?" but she rarely spoke of her mother to any one. Once she spoke her mind too freely to Miss Sullivan's mother, and was deemed impudent by that lady, who undoubtedly was correct in her opinion. Edith was hustled into her chamber and told to remain there until she would ask the old lady's pardon; and three days and a half elapsed before the willful child would yield, and then it was a kind of compromise. Many times during her imprisonment she would form plans to escape, but the windows

were so high that she had to give up and submit to the inevitable.

Thus Edith's life passed for three years when Captain Lyton came to see his child, and immediately made known his intentions of removing her to another school : whether he thought she had been attending more to play than study, or what his reasons were, we are not prepared to say, but certain it is that this change was made all in a hurry and bustle, just as all Captain Lyton's changes were made.

Edith bade Miss Sullivan and all her little playmates a tearful good-by, and followed her father sadly across the plank of the river steamboat, and waved a last adieu to the little band of friends gathered on the shore.

"All ashore!" shouts the deck-hand for the third time, as he, with the help of another like himself, pulled the plank from the wharf, and in another moment the beautiful steamer is gliding down the river.

Edith seated herself near the rail, and watched, forgetful of almost everything, the lovely prospect spread out before her : green fields sweep back from the water's edge as far as the eye can reach ; the scene changes, and a gaunt mountain rises forbiddingly for a few moments to obstruct the view ; the river bends and a populous little village, the hum of whose activity you can distinctly hear, bursts upon your vision.

While Edith is absorbed in the changing prospect, we will take a look at her father. Captain Lyton has changed since we saw him last ; his black, wavy hair is thickly threaded with gray, and there is an expression of dis-

satisfaction in his face, as if his life had been a failure, and he was weary of it all.

At length he throws the paper he has been so intently perusing one side, and with a prolonged yawn leans back in his chair, balancing the same on its back legs.

"I am so glad you have finished your paper, papa, for I want you to tell me the name of that green island yonder."

Captain Lyton roused himself and gave the desired information, and once roused, he was a very entertaining companion; so they conversed on many topics, and the time passed quickly. Hitherto Edith's father had avoided all personal subjects, but as the shades of evening begun to gather, and the part of the boat where they were seated became deserted save by father and child, Captain Lyton cleared his throat with much decision, and without any preamble, dashed into the subject he wished to communicate.

"Edith," he said, quickly, "I have adopted a little boy and named him Harry, after our little dead Harry."

There was a dead silence, and, with quickly beating heart, Captain Lyton waited for Edith to speak, for underneath his stern exterior he possessed a warm heart, and although he understood his child but little better than a stranger, he loved her dearly, and had worshipped her mother.

When he had stood beside the open grave of her he loved better than his own life, he felt that he had lost all hold on happiness, and that with the going out of her life all the better instincts of his nature were crushed;

he had struggled on since then, like a mariner without chart or compass, and there was more danger than any one suspected, that his weak bark would founder.

When he found himself thinking of old endearing memories, he would drown all such thoughts in the most turbulent excitement, anything was better than to think ; and so it came about that, borne on by this desire to forget and be happy in so doing, Capt. Lyton contracted his second marriage in six short months after his wife's death.

He had plunged into this untimely marriage much in the same way he would have leaped into his sail-boat and go out into a storm, hoping that by the exertion he would have to make to steer this frail craft, he might for the time being forget all that troubled his inner life.

In less than one year little Harry was born and he loved the child very dearly. The only real solace he had found in this second marriage was this little, wee baby.

The baby's mother loved her husband with all the strength of her warm, southern heart, and never knew, poor, trusting soul, that she had given all and received almost nothing.

Capt. Lyton in his calmer moments was ashamed of this hasty marriage, and fearing the effect it might have on Edith, had decided to let it remain a secret. But baby Harry was over two years old now, and sooner or later Edith must know the truth, so he thought to prepare her mind for it gradually this way.

Had Edith been of a jealous nature this revelation would have made her unhappy, but with all the child's

wilfulness, and many little faults, she was neither jealous or selfish.

When Capt. Lyton spoke of his adopted boy to her, the truthful eyes of his child looked only surprise into his own as she simply said, "It seems so strange, papa ; how old is he ?"

"Little more than two years old," replied her father.

Edith timidly took her father's hand in hers and playfully braided and unbraided his fingers, and giving a quick glance to make sure that they were alone, she crept close to his side, and leaning against his shoulder, nervously twisted the buttons on his coat ; Capt. Lyton gathered her up in his arms, and pressed her close to his heart, as he showered caresses on the little up-turned face. "Never fear, darling, that this child, or anything, can ever be as dear to me as you are. Remember you are the golden link which binds me to your sainted mother." This was a very unusual outburst of feeling in her father, and she was almost dazed by it.

It was not till they had sat for some moments, with the pale moonlight falling serenely around them, that Edith ventured to speak. "Papa, I was not thinking, she said very softly (and her voice was so like her mother's), of your loving this little boy better than me, but I was wishing you had called him by some other name ; I could never bear to call another brother Harry."

This was the keenest thrust the father had yet received, and revealed to him something of his child's heart. He thought bitterly and not without reason, that she would hate doubly to call another woman moth-

er. It seemed to him that by this rash marriage he had separated himself from his child forever, or at least from her love.

Again he threw his arms around her and drew her so closely to him in his sudden fear of losing her, that it almost frightened her. "What is the matter, papa ; did I hurt your feelings ? forgive me, and I will love your little adopted Harry for your sake ;" and Captain Lyton kissed his little girl very tenderly, and Edie thought that a tear fell on her face ; but it is so easy to be mistaken, and it might have been only spray.

Thus the father and child separated for the night, she to sleep so sweetly in her innocence, while he tossed restlessly, in troubled dreams. He seemed to be standing over his dying wife once more, and slowly, but like a death-warrant, her dying words rang out upon his ears : "You must forget yourself and comfort her. You must be father and mother both to her ; promise me Henry." Then the face of the dying woman seemed to change and it was Edith's face he looked upon, and her gray eyes flashed fire and fury from them as she upbraided him for his secret marriage, and he awoke to find it a dream.

CHAPTER III.

ALL ALONE.

EDITH's new home was not as happy a one as Miss Sullivan's had been. She boarded with a family who

were old friends of her father, and attended school with their daughter, a young miss some year and a half Edith's senior.

Hattie Thompson was an only child and had been petted and indulged all her life; she was naturally of a positive character, and laid down whatever she said with an emphasis that implied, I have said it, let no one dare contradict me. This manner of Hattie's often vexed Edith, who was possessed of a fine memory, and seldom made a statement unless she could back it up with facts. Hattie was often forgetful, and although she would not tell an untruth knowingly, she sometimes made grave mistakes; but, as a rule, they got on well for girls so nearly of an age.

Hattie's father was a man of fine personal appearance, and was fully aware of this fact as the admiring glances he bestowed upon himself in the mirror gave proof.

He never followed any regular business, but was always going to do some wonderful thing, which should astonish the world at some future day, so he spent much of his time in his cozy easy chair, reading of the brave struggles of other men who had made themselves famous, while his wife, poor soul, worked and planned and worried for her family.

It was not because they had any love for motherless Edith that they consented to board her, but because the remuneration they would receive would be a great help in family expenses; so taking Edith's new home in all its bearings, it was not a pleasant one. If she talked of an evening she was sure to incur the displeasure of

Mr. Thompson, who did not hesitate to extinguish all the light from that young life for days after, by giving her the most withering sarcasm.

With Mrs. Thompson she found no more love and sympathy than with her husband ; if she did not express herself so clearly as Mr. Thompson was in the habit of doing, her hints were quite as objectionable, and the sensitive child understood them although she said nothing ; gradually she became more and more isolated from the family, and would spend hours in her own room reading there.

It was there that she forgot herself and all her vexations as she read *Waverly*, *Ivanhoe*, and many interesting stories.

There was one bright, beautiful thing in Edith's life, and this was her love for a lady teacher in the institution where she was a pupil. Miss Vanblack was indeed a lovely woman, and under her gentle influence Edith expanded like a flower ; in fact, the wilful child was as tractable as one could wish.

Two years passed swiftly away, two years of trial to Edith, years of daily aggravation ; it would have been impossible to have told her nearest friend the difficulties of her every-day life ; it was like walking through a field of thistles and feeling them stab you at every step ; yet, as you look back upon your thorny pathway, each and every particular thistle looks so innocent you cannot determine which has been the offender, and Captain Lyton, in his far-away home, heard not so much as a murmur coming from his child, and supposed her happy ; and as he

found her steadily advancing in her studies, troubled himself no more with the matter.

There was one thing which did trouble him, it haunted him by day and by night, and sometimes he would fly to strong drink to obliterate, at least for a few hours, this veracious subject, which was no other than the secret of his marriage. After much thought he decided to brave the worst, and write the whole truth to Edith.

Some two weeks after Capt. Lyton had written to reveal the secret which had so long distracted his mind, Edith came home from school, feeling unusually gay; she hummed a lively tune as she ran lightly up-stairs, on her way to her room.

"There is a letter for you, called Mrs. Thompson, and Edith eagerly took her letter and seated herself in her own little room to read it. We will look over her shoulder while she reads.

"MY DEAR EDITH, — Yours of Oct. 15th came duly to hand, and really I am delighted with the progress you are making in your studies, as your letter convinces me, and more so as I long to have your school-days over and to have you join us here. I trust my dear little Edie will forgive me when I tell her that, fearing to hurt her feelings, I made a great mistake in concealing my marriage, which occurred several years since. My wife is a lovely woman, and loves you already because you are my own little girl. Harry is growing to be a fine boy, and loves you very dearly, and often prattles about you. Whatever you may think, I beg of you not to hate your

poor father for an act for which he has bitterly repented. Truly, my child, I would bear all the pain which I know this disclosure will give you, if I could. So I trust you will forgive me, and remember that my greatest fault has been in loving you too well.

“Your affectionate father,

“H. LYTON.”

With a groan she threw the letter from her as she finished the last word, and pressing her hands tightly to her forehead, she tried to think ; it was dreadful, another woman in her mother's place, and had been for so long, and she was happy in her blissful ignorance ; she must be dreaming, it could not be true ; and picking up the letter, she read it slowly through, letting each word sink into her very brain. Then she leaned her feverish brow against the window-pane, and tried to realize the truth. Hot, scalding tears gathered in her eyes and fell in torrents down her face. At length she grew calm and determined that no one, not even her father, should know what she suffered. So she choked her anguish back into her heart and gave no outward sign of the inward struggle. As soon as she could command herself she wrote her father a letter, in which she spoke kindly of his wife, and wished him to be very happy.

After this Edith grew more thoughtful than she had ever been, and applied herself with renewed energy to her books during the six months that followed.

About this time, the letters she had always received so regularly from her father stopped, and for four weeks Edith

had been anxiously waiting for a letter. She felt restless and anxious as she inquired of Mrs. Thompson, one night, if there were any letters for her; there was one, and Edith noticed as she seated herself in her little sanctum to read it, that it was directed in a strange hand-writing. A feeling of dread possessed her, and it was not for some moments that she gathered strength to open it. It was a brief letter from the American Consul of the place where Captain Lyton lived, telling of his sudden death with rheumatic fever.

The rain dashed against the window-pane with a ceaseless patter, and seemed to say, first in a gentle whisper, and then louder and louder, the two sad words, "all alone." Seated on the floor with her face buried in the cushion of her chair, she gave full sway to the grief which overwhelmed her.

Thus she had remained for one long hour so still, that, were it not for an occasional sob which shook her frame, one would have hardly known that she lived or suffered.

"Have you received bad news, Edith," said Mrs. Thompson, entering the room.

Edith made no answer but held out her hand with the crumpled letter in it.

Mrs. Thompson quickly read it, and proceeded to say that, undoubtedly, it was all for the best. "I hear," she continued "that your father of late has grown dissipated, and had he lived longer it might have been to disgrace you."

This was a sudden revelation to Edith, and coming at such a time, was the one drop of bitterness too much;

it was like probing a dangerous wound ; but she was too completely overcome by all this dreadful suffering to make any reply, and she thought, Will it never be over? Will she never stop talking and leave me alone? When Mrs. Thompson left the room, her own eyes were moist, for the silent grief of the child was more touching than the wildest outburst would have been.

The rain still kept falling, keeping up a mournful accompaniment to the young girl's grief. Twilight came, and long shadows crept into the room, falling like a pall over the child. Her bright sunny hair looked black in the gathering gloom ; but what cared she for darkness? was not all the light in her young life extinguished? Oh, if she could only die and be at rest forever! Then the memory of the five sad years since her mother died came surging over her, and she longed, thus early in life's journey, for rest and forgetfulness.

Gently opening the door, Hattie Thompson softly entered the room ; so softly, that Edith, absorbed as she was in her own grief, hardly was aware of her presence, until she bowed her head on the same chair with Edith, and was sobbing as if this great sorrow was her own. Edith raised her head for the first time, and said, in a husky voice, " Heaven bless you, Hattie, for these tears you have shed with me ; they have spoken to my heart as words could not, and I will never forget them."

Edith was indeed all alone. She had one uncle, her mother's only brother, Amos Hazel by name, who was as unlike Edith's gentle mother as brother and sister could well be. He had made the warmest professions of love

for his sister during her lifetime, and had shed some tears when the news of her untimely death reached him, and straightway composed a piece of poetry concerning her,—for he was quite a poet,—and then had gone back to his old dreamy life, scarcely giving Ella's child a thought. He might have shown more interest in his little niece had it not been for his wife, who had ever felt a certain jealousy of Ella during her life-time, as she was much beloved by all who knew her; and this jealous-natured woman could not bear to have her praises sung even after her death; besides this, she had two daughters of her own, and was ever on the alert for fear Edith would in some way outshine them. Edith possessed a pretty face. This fact, combined with a certain power to please, which Edith had in great measure, was sufficient to make her an object of aversion to Mrs. Hazel, or Aunt Laura, as the child used to call her.

During the occasional visits Edith had made them, Aunt Laura lost no opportunity of prejudicing her husband's mind, and although always sweet to the child's face, behind her back she exaggerated every little childish folly, until Amos Hazel had learned to think of the child with a sigh and wish, in the words of his wife, that she was more like her lamented mother. . . .

Mrs. Hazel's sitting-room was a bright, cheerful room, although far from elegant. In one of the long windows which looked out upon a pleasant piazza, hung a pot of trailing vines, while an occasional tiny blossom gave light and color to this mass of green. Under it stood a green wire stand, full of choice house plants.

A fat gray cat was stretched at full length on the rug in front of the stove, while a tall girl, evidently some twenty years of age, reclined languidly in the old-fashioned arm-chair, near the rug on which kitty was vainly trying to snooze: vainly, I say, because Victoria Hazel was trying to interrupt that nap with an occasional kick of her shapely foot. "Don't kick that cat another time," cried a sharp and angry voice; "you are always doing something disagreeable, Victoria Hazel." The speaker was Laura Hazel, the younger sister. She was opposite in all respects from her languid sister. Victoria's hair was black and abundant, her complexion very sallow; but she had one redeemable feature in a pair of splendid black eyes, which atoned in great measure for the snub nose and homely mouth.

Laura was three years her junior, and was as full of life and vivacity as her sister was languid. She was small and slight in form, and had it not been for two playful dimples, which gave her a witching look, one would have called her very plain.

Victoria raised her eyes from the book she was reading, and darted an angry look at her sister.

"I will kick the cat if I want to, saucebox. I was not hurting her at all: you are very tender of your old cat;" and, with this last remark, she lifted the cat on her foot and gave her a toss.

Laura threw down her sewing and ran to the rescue of her favorite, scolding and fretting lustily, until the mother, hearing the disturbance from the next room,

where she was busy with household duties, opened the door, and said,—

“Come, girls, don’t quarrel; one of you had better come out and help me a while.”

“Make Victoria go,” said Laura. “I am sewing, and she is not doing anything.”

“I am tired almost to death, Mother Hazel,” groaned Victoria, “and I shall not do another thing to-day; if you want any help, let that lazy Laura help you; she is too hateful to live.”

Laura had just commenced an elaborate defence of herself when the door-bell rung, and away she flew to answer the call. Returning a moment later she exclaimed,—

“It is a letter from B., but it is not in Edith’s handwriting, and I am crazy to know its contents;” so, suiting the action to the word, she broke the seal and read. It proved to be a short letter from Mr. Thompson, making known Captain Lyton’s death, and requesting Mr. Hazel to make inquiries concerning his life insurance, as Captain Lyton had been insured in a prominent company in the city where Mr. Hazel lived.

Mrs. Hazel’s brother, a wealthy man, was one of the directors of this same company, and to him, from time to time, had the business connected with this insurance been intrusted.

“Well, I declare!” said Mrs. Hazel, sinking into a chair. “I suppose we shall have to have that child come here, now. Well, she can help me about the work, and his life insurance will pay her way, for I believe it amounted to

about two thousand dollars ; that is, if it has been kept up all right ; but the Lord only knows what Henry Lyton has been doing for the last two years, and he may have neglected even this. But Amos must go and see my brother Lucian to-night, and find out all about it. In case there is nothing left for her, I suppose I shall have to take her all the same, and Amos' mother too, for that matter."

Mrs. Lyton's mother had always lived with her until she went to the West Indies, and since then Captain Lyton had supported her.

The thought of all this oppressed Mrs. Hazel deeply, and she went back to her work with a heavy heart.

She was a tall, gaunt woman, with the same dark sal-low complexion she had transmitted to her children. Her hair was iron gray, and her eyes large and black.

Lucian Barker had worked his way up from a poor lad to wealth and influence. He was a hard, calculating man, and was far from pleased when he found that the last payment on Captain Lyton's life insurance had been neglected, — a neglect which left the orphan child of his old friend destitute, for it was ascertained that Captain Lyton had left his business in a complicated condition, and nothing remained for Edith.

Lucian Barker might have used his influence in behalf of the unfortunate child, and obtained something from this wealthy company ; but she had no influential friends to plead in her behalf, and so this rich man, this benevolent gentleman, settled back in his easy chair, and wondered how any one could be so careless about matters

of such grave importance, and also went to considering what was best to do with Henry Lyton's child, the result of which deliberation will be given in our next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

EDITH'S NEW HOME.

It was the morning of the day that Edith arrived at her Uncle Hazel's. The world looked like a garden on this beautiful day; the trees were white with blossoms, and Edith, standing under Aunt Laura's old golden sweet apple tree, felt the loveliness of the scene to the utmost extent of her nature. Little birds twittered in the boughs of the old tree, while every passing breeze sent showers of delicate pink and white leaves all around her. Mingling with her rapturous appreciation of this lovely spring morning was a feeling of intense sadness. She had borne up bravely through all the trying days which had followed the announcement of her father's death; but all the time tugging at her heart was that dreadful feeling of loneliness and pain. Her sad reflections were soon cut short by Aunt Laura's voice.

"Come, Edith, here is the broom; just sweep the back stoop nicely, and then sweep the front sidewalk as clean as you can." Edith was unaccustomed to the use of the broom, and but half the task was accomplished when two big blisters made their appearance on the delicate palms; but she kept bravely to her work, pausing

only to get breath until the work was finished ; but all the time the pain at her heart kept growing until it seemed unbearable. Edith had hardly hung the broom in its accustomed place when the voice of Aunt Laura again commanded her to go into the yard and take the clothes from the line. Wearily, the young girl took up the heavy basket and went out to do her aunt's bidding.

Edith has changed much since we first described her as a little girl, playing by her mother's side. Five years had elapsed, and Edith had just passed her fourteenth birthday ; a very pretty picture she made, as, standing on tiptoe to reach the line, she removes one after another of the articles hanging thereon. She was still a little thing, and the hand that tugs away at that obstinate clothes-pin is no larger than a child's. Her hair looks like threads of burnished gold, as the sunshine rests upon it, and, confined by a single ribbon, falls in waving masses far below her waist ; hers was a speaking face full of light and shadow ; the dark gray eyes have gained a deeper look with the years which have brought such varied experiences ; her mouth was one of those tempting rose-bud mouths one could never see without desiring to kiss ; but just now it was shut so tightly, with the strong effort she was making to look unconcerned, that one felt like crying for her. Taking her all in all, she was one of those sweet, innocent, trustful natures, and seemed to have been born to be loved and protected.

Edith placed the clothes-basket with its heavy contents on the kitchen table, when again Mrs. Hazel spoke. "You may pare the potatoes for dinner, Edith ;" but just

at this point Cousin Laura interposed. "Come, mother, do let Edith rest a moment. I should think she would be tired, travelling all night on that tiresome steamboat, and you have kept her going steadily for the last hour. I will pare the potatoes myself. Edie, you go and lie down, or sit in the big chair and rest."

Edith was glad to do as Laura directed, for she was tired and sick at heart. Victoria looked languidly up from the book she was reading, as Edith entered the room, and said, "Poor little thing! you must be tired to death, and you have had so much trouble too. Mother never knows when any one has done enough."

And then with a prolonged yawn she returned to her book.

A few days after Edith's arrival, Mrs. Hazel made known her intention of cleaning house, and stated that she should expect Laura and Edith to help her.

Aunt Laura was scrupulously neat, and although no daring insect had ever been found in her beds, still for fear of such a dreadful danger, she washed her bedsteads twice a year, and after dipping a feather into some poisonous drug, she would thoroughly paint them in every crack and crevice; so to Edith and Laura she intrusted this part of the business, with many directions. Laura was silent for full five minutes, a wonderful length of time for that young lady, when her voice broke the stillness with,

"Come, all you bed-bugs, to the slaughter
Of Mrs. Hazel and her youngest daughter."

This produced too much laughter on the part of Mrs.

Hazel's assistants, for it very much retarded their progress. Aunt Laura commanded silence, and with subdued giggling they continued their work.

This was new work for Edith and soon her hands looked like illustrated maps, where, here and there, the skin had disappeared; and so her life passed for three weeks, when one day she was invited into the parlor, to be introduced to a gentleman. He was a tall, heavily-built man, apparently forty five years old; his hair was iron gray, and a full beard of shaggy whiskers, with very grizzly eyebrows, gave him a rough-and-ready look. Mrs. Hazel was all smiles as she introduced Edith as "my neice, Edith Lyton, Mr. Prentice." Edith timidly took his hand as Aunt Laura explained. Mr. Prentice is a near neighbor of ours; the thought crossed Edith's mind that it was strange for Aunt Laura to take so much trouble to introduce her to a stranger, as often, since she had been there, she was not even asked into the parlor when they had company; but Edith was unsuspecting, and the thought soon passed out of her mind.

The next day Mr. Prentice called again, and invited Edith to go to ride with himself and wife, an invitation she gladly accepted.

Mrs. Prentice was a woman of middle age, but very well preserved, and was as over-particular in her manner of dress as her husband was the reverse. She possessed a pair of very handsome blue eyes, but they were simply handsome; there was no soul in them, and as their cold glance fell upon Edith, she felt chilled to the heart, and so the ride was not a very delightful one to Edith.

The day following the ride Edith was honored by a call from Lucien Barker, during which he made known a proposition he wished to make for her consideration.

"Mr. Prentice," he said, "is a gentleman I have known for many years, and if one of my daughters were left as you are, I could desire no better home than he could give her. Mr. Prentice has but one child, a son, who against his father's wishes has joined the Southern army, and in all probability he will never return; so of course Mr Prentice's home is very desolate. I went to him and told him about you, he desired to see you and you already know the rest. He was much pleased with you and would like to have you come into his family as his own child. I will give you two days to think the matter over in," Mr. Barker continued, "at the end of which time I will come for your decision."

The two allotted days soon passed and Mr. Barker came for Edith's answer.

"What have you decided to do?" he asked, after a few moment's delay.

"Mr. Barker," said Edith, "do you not think I could do something to earn my own living, it is so hard to be dependent?"

"Why, my dear child," he replied impatiently, "you never did anything in your life, and you are too young and too small, and if I were you I should rather be dependent where I was wanted than where I was not."

This last remark cut deep, but she knew the truth of it full well, so without making more objection she quietly said, "Very well, I will go to live with Mr. Prentice."

That night the Hazel family talked the matter over, and Victoria remarked, languidly, that she should not think they would want Edith to go there, for Mr. Prentice was known to be a perfect old libertine. This last remark was quickly silenced by Mrs. Hazel who was even now fearful that her cherished plan would fall through. Laura chimed in with, "For my part I do pity Edith, for Mr. Prentice and his wife do quarrel fearfully, and I should not think that Mrs. Prentice could be prevailed upon to take so pretty a girl as Edith into the family, for she is notoriously jealous."

"Come, come, girls, don't let Edith hear one word of this, or you will upset it all, and I want Edith to go there; it will make her a good home, and as for difficulties which may arise, she possesses the Lyton grit, and I will risk her." So Edith's fate was decided.

Mr. Prentice was a man of wealth and leisure. His home was a very pleasant one; extensive grounds surrounded the house and were tastefully laid out in winding walks, while here and there rare flowering shrubs lent shade and beauty to the place. To the right of the house, a winding carriage drive swept up to the barn, a neat, substantial looking building.

The house was designed more for comfort than elegance; a broad veranda across the front, and partially around two sides of the house, looked like a bower of beauty, on the lovely June morning when Edith looked upon it for the first time; roses and buds hung in rich clusters from every post, and trailed in graceful festoons from the ornamental railings.

Edith was left alone on this her first day in Mr. Prentice's house, for that gentleman and his wife had a previous engagement that called them from home for the day. Mr. Prentice said, in his jolly, pleasant way,

"Now, Edith, make yourself perfectly at home; go from the top of the house to the cellar if you wish. Here is the library this way," he said, entering a large, pleasant room, the long windows of which looked out on Mrs. Prentice's flower-garden. "You will find plenty of reading matter here; so just amuse yourself, and don't get lonesome until we return."

Mrs. Prentice haughtily nodded her head to Edith as they passed out of the room, and freezingly looked down upon the little girl as much as to say. You are scarcely worth my notice, but from my supreme height I condescend to notice even such as you.

The time passed quickly to Edith for the first hour or two, for, selecting a volume from the well-filled shelves, she was soon lost in its contents. At length, growing weary of reading, and feeling the silence of the house almost oppressive, she replaced her book on the shelf she had taken it from, and opening the door which led into the parlor, slowly walked through the two long rooms.

Elegant marble vases adorned the mantles, and a long mirror dimly reflected Edith and her lovely surroundings. Many pictures hung on the walls, which seemed to have been bought with a desire to furnish the room rather than to gratify the taste of the owner. The stillness of the place was stifling, and passing back into the library once more, she opened one of the shutters, and stepped

out on the green lawn and down into the flower garden. It was too early yet for many flowers, but there was a refreshing newness in every little sprout and twig. The grass was like velvet, and the young leaves on the trees were such a tender green, it seemed as if the whole world was a new creation. The birds sang jubilantly, and Edith wished half sadly that she was a little bird, with nothing to do but build a nest in a tree, and sing from morning till night,

Poor child ! how her young heart yearned for love and tenderness ; no wonder that the very singing of the birds seemed to mock her loneliness. Then she finished her walk in the garden and strolled out to the barn. Mr. Prentice's hired man was at work there, and he looked merrily up as he saw the timid face of Edith looking at him.

"So you are Mr. Prentice's adopted girl, are you?" he said,

"Yes sir." she replied simply ; then the man fell to whistling, and Edith wondered why every one should be so happy, while she felt so miserable. At last the long day was over and Mr. Prentice and his wife returned. They took supper in the large, cool dining-room, and Mrs. Prentice presided at the table in the same stately way. Mr. Prentice pinched Edith's cheek, and remarked, "We will get some color in those pale cheeks soon ; you ought to drink plenty of milk ;" and addressing his wife, he said, "Abbie, order Clara to bring in some milk at once."

Mrs. Prentice raised her eyes to her husband's face,

giving him a glance which was intended to be withering, as she replied, —

“The milk is all sold, only what we need for family uses, she can drink tea, or, I suppose water would be more apt to produce red cheeks.”

This was said with much emphasis on the red cheeks. Edith's pale face had flushed into one blaze of color, while Mr. Prentice bit his lip to keep back the gathering storm, and said, darting an angry glance at his wife, at the same time bringing his fist on the table with such force it made the China rattle, “Henceforth I want you to remember that I keep a cow for my own accommodation, and not for the profit of selling milk; so never dare tell me again that the milk is all sold, for I warn you, you will be sorry if you do.”

The wretched meal was finished in silence, soon after which they separated for the night.

Mrs. Prentice coldly told Edith that, for the present, she could sleep with Clara, the maid of all work, as the room Mr. Prentice designed to give her was not ready for her, and thus poor Edith's new life began.

Mr. Prentice was fond of pets, and he became much attached to Edith in a short time, a fact which was duly noted by his wife, and caused her to hate the young girl with renewed energy: at first she was vexed because her husband insisted on taking Edith into the family, but when she found he was really becoming attached to the girl, and instead of remaining away from home, evening after evening, as had ever been his custom, he seemed contented and happy to spend his time in the home circle,

she began to fear that she had a dangerous rival in this mere child, and hated the innocent cause of her trouble with all the strength of her narrow nature. She compelled Edith to do the roughest kitchen drudgery, and left no stone unturned to make her life unbearable.

Sometimes Mr. Prentice would say, "Come Edith, get on your things and go with me ; I have got business up to the farm, and it will be a pleasant ride for you."

Edith would be ready as soon as the horse was at the door, and away they would go, with Mr. Prentice's old dog Snip sitting between them, and for a few hours the child would be happy ; for she did not see the angry face of Mrs. Prentice looking after them, as, with clenched fist and hissing voice, she vowed vengeance upon Edith's unsuspecting head.

One night Mr. Prentice had returned home after a long ride, very tired : he devoured his supper with a keen relish, and, lighting his cigar, repaired to the veranda to smoke.

"Come, Edith, I want you," he called, and away she bounded, glad to be by his side.

For some reason he was more communicative to-night than usual, and said, as he drew her gently towards him, "I love you just as dearly as if you were my own child, and I wish you were my own flesh and blood, for then I could show my love just as I desire, and no one could talk. You have made my home very bright, little girl, since you came. God bless you !"

Edith's heart was full ; this was almost the first words of affection she had listened to since she parted from

her father. Her eyes were full of tears as she pressed his hand in silence. Just then a soft shower of rain commenced to fall, but the stars were shining, and Edith said, "How strange!" when Mr. Prentice spoke in a voice of thunder, "Abbie, don't throw that stream of water in this direction again, for if you do, you will regret it."

Mrs. Prentice had seen fit to turn the hose in their direction, for as she was out late watering her flowers, she heard her husband and Edith talking, and crept nearer, that she might hear the whole of the conversation; and as she listened to the words of affection he had uttered, she could bear no more, and quickly, without thought, she turned the water upon them. This was but one of the many annoying things she was constantly doing

One day Edith stopped, on her way to school, at her uncle's. She noticed that Victoria treated her with unusual coldness, while Laura scarcely spoke to her: the fact was, Aunt Laura had learned through Mrs. Prentice, things were not going smoothly at their house. Aunt Laura was fearful that Edith would be obliged to leave there, but was fully determined that she should not return to her house, for she said she had all she wanted to do to take care of her own family, with the addition of Amos' mother. As for Edith, it was of little moment to her what became of her; it was better for her and her children that Edith should live elsewhere, but whether happily, disgracefully, or otherwise, it mattered not; so she had instructed the girls not to give their little cousin any sympathy, else she might think to return to them.

The poor child's cup was full to overflowing, and this added feather almost broke the camel's back. As she was passing sadly out of the room, Mrs. Hazel said, "Edith, I wish to see you after school, I have something particular to say to you." Edith wondered all that afternoon what Aunt Laura wished to say to her, but stopped at night as she was requested.

Mrs. Hazel asked her to go into the next room with her, as she wished to see her alone, and commenced by looking at Edith severely, as she said, "I want to know if you are going to do any better at Mr. Prentice's than you have done."

"No, Aunt Laura," she replied, "I have done my best, and no one can do better."

"Tut! tut!" said Mrs. Hazel, "you know better than that. Mrs. Prentice tells me that if she asks you to wash dishes, you break them and hide them, and when any questions are asked, you even tell untruths to escape blame. What have you to say to all this?"

Edith was angry; she had borne and borne, but to be accused of what she never had done, and, worst of all, to have her truthfulness brought into question, was more than she could endure. The gray eyes grew large and dark, while sparks of fire seemed to flash from them; her face was ashy pale, even her lips: but she had not been through the discipline of the last five years without result; so, with a terrible effort at self-control, she replied, "I went to Mr. Prentice, not as a servant, Aunt Laura, but to take the place of a child to them. Mr. Prentice has been as kind as my own father could have

been ; his wife, on the contrary, has lost no chance to make my life wretched ; but I can truly say that never yet have I refused to do anything she has asked of me, and have done it as well as I knew how ; the story of my breaking dishes and hiding them is totally untrue."

"Edith," said Mrs. Hazel, "stop right where you are. Mrs. Prentice told me this and I shall believe her, for all believing you."

Edith rose and walked straight to the door.

"Come back this moment ! I am not half through with you," said Aunt Laura, in an angry voice.

"Yes, you are," replied Edith ; "You said you did not believe what I have said, and that is enough."

Aunt Laura screamed, "Sit down, and hear what I have to say !" But she might as well have talked to the winds that blow, for Edith had rushed past her, and was far out on the street.

For the first time in her life, she wondered if she could not kill herself, and thus put an end to this horrible life: she hated the light of God's beautiful sunshine ; she almost hated God in her agony ; "for if he loves me, why does he permit me to be so miserable?" She had thrown herself on a rustic seat near the barn, after a long and unrefreshing walk. The old Newfoundland dog, Nero, came up to her, and laying his nose on her knee, seemed mutely to sympathize with her, and, throwing her arms around his neck, she buried her face in his silky black hair, and sobbed out her anguish.

The stars came out one by one, and with her wet face pressed against old Nero's head, she looked up at them,

and wondered if her mother knew how sad and desperate her little girl was.

Breaking upon her sad reflections, was the sound of carriage wheels, and soon Mr. Prentice's pleasant voice was heard, as he threw the reins to the stable-man and alighted, whistling a gay tune, as he passed down the walk where poor Edith sat so disconsolately.

"Humpty dumpty, here we are, hugged up so tight to old Nero, and what! been crying, I declare." Mr. Prentice pushed Nero from the seat and seated himself in the vacant place.

"Now what is the matter little girl; this will never do. Has any one been cross to her; this old chap will take care of them if they have." After a little delay, Edith told him all, and also made known her intention of leaving his house."

"I know it has not been pleasant for you here," said Mr. Prentice, "but I think I have power to make it more so." Just then the shrubbery behind them rustled, but as they saw nothing Mr. Prentice continued. "I love you as well as if you were my own child, and would rather give twenty thousand dollars than to have you leave my home; you have brightened up the old place wonderfully since you came; but if you cannot be made comfortable and happy here, I shall board you elsewhere. I shall always do for you as long as I live, and you shall never want for anything."

It was well they could not see the wrathful visage of Mrs. Prentice, who, concealed by the shrubbery, was listening to their conversation. Long after they had

gone in, she lingered to calm her ruffled nerves, and plot vengeance on the orphan girl.

"I wish I could strangle her," she hissed between her shut teeth; but when an hour later she entered the house, one would not have known the calm, haughty face of the mistress of this home, for the angry unreasonable woman of an hour before.

Day after day passed wearily away to Edith. Mrs. Prentice was a little better to her than formerly, but for some unaccountable reason Mr. Prentice avoided her, and treated her with indifference. At last the house became intolerable, and going to her uncle's one night, she sought her grandmother and told her all her trouble. Grandma advised her to leave there at once, and gave her money to do so.

They had a distant relative residing in a village some twelve miles away, whose husband was overseer in a large mill, and Grandma said, "Perhaps he would give her work; anything was better than to have her stay at Mr. Prentice's, for they are even now beginning to circulate stories which will ruin your reputation."

"I cannot bear it," sobbed Edith; "I have tried hard to do right, and everything grows worse with me all the time."

"Trust in the Lord, Edith, He knows what is best for us, better than we do ourselves," said Grandma.

"I can't trust Him," said Edith, bitterly; "if he has brought all this trouble on me, I hate Him, and I cannot help it."

With these last words she sprang, rather than walked

from the room, and dashed out into the wet street, for it was raining ; on and on she went, unmindful of wet feet or muddy dress, until, exhausted by this long continued physical exertion, she went back to Mr. Prentice's house to sleep for the last time.

There is no way by which a severe mental agony can be soothed, equal to complete physical exhaustion ; so Edith, tired and worn out in body, slept.

When first she opened her eyes next morning, it was with a sense of pain she wondered what had happened, and gradually the crushing weight of yesterday's sorrow settled down upon her.

With a heavy heart she made preparation to leave the house where, for five weary months, she had suffered such keen torture.

Aunt Laura felt it her duty to say, that she thought it best for Edith to make a change, as she understood that Mr. Prentice had been heard to remark, that he would rather part with anything than Edith ; and that if his wife wished, she could get a divorce, or do anything she saw fit ;—but he would never part with the adopted daughter.

“ You see,” said Aunt Laura, “ you cannot blame Mrs. Prentice, for of course she loves her husband, and it is hard to be supplanted by any one in your husband's heart.

Aunt Laura's remarks might all have been true ; but how could she consistently blame the poor child, who had, against her own inclinations, but because there was no alternative, been placed in the lion's mouth,

Edith bade Grandma a warm good-by, and Grandma

whispered in her ear. "Don't never say you hate God again, darling; but just trust Him." And with fast-falling tears, the young girl stepped forth into the wide, wide world.

CHAPTER V.

HOMELESS.

EDITH dried her eyes, for she wished to pass along unobserved; but before she had accomplished half the distance to the railway station, she saw with dismay Mr. Prentice's familiar carriage approaching. A moment of unpleasant suspense; would he know her? Yes, he noticed her, and quickly drove up to the sidewalk.

"Where are you going, Edith?" was his first inquiry, as he took a hasty look at the little sad face, and the heavy travelling bag she was making so much effort to carry.

"I am going to W.," she said, with downcast eyes.

"Why are you going there, Edith?"

"Because I wish to," she replied evasively.

"Well, get into the carriage, and drive home with me, and if, after dinner, you really wish to go, I will drive you to the station."

"I prefer to walk," she slowly answered, with averted eyes.

Mr. Prentice was vexed; the cold, proud way in which this young girl had repulsed him, annoyed him beyond

endurance ; so, touching his horse with the whip, he gave a prolonged whistle and drove rapidly away.

Could Mr. Prentice have looked into Edith's heart, and known how much she longed for one kind word from him when parting, and could he have realized, also, that Aunt Laura's last words were rankling bitterly, his anger would have disappeared like dew before the sun. But he realized only this, that after all his love and kindness, she could leave him without one regret ; so he closed his heart forever to the little orphan girl he had professed to love like his own.

The weary walk to the station was at length accomplished, and with dizzy head and panting breath, she climbed upon the cars, and away they bounded bearing our little friend to her uncertain future.

Edith's face was pale, and black circles around her weary eyes showed something of the dreadful suffering through which she was passing. The distance to W. was short, and to a little cottage house, standing not far from the railway, Edith bent her tired footsteps. Her timid knock was answered by the mistress of this snug little home, who started with an exclamation of surprise when she beheld Edith, who stood holding the big bag, and looking the ghost of her former bright self.

"Why, Edith Lyton, where did you come from?"

"From H., just now," she replied.

"Come right in. I almost forgot to ask you, in my surprise."

Mrs. Brown was a bright little body with laughing blue eyes, and waving brown hair, that wanted to curl so

badly that it always seemed a little dissatisfied that its mistress would do it up in puffs and braids, regardless of its own inclination.

"Come, child," she said, "let me take your things, and tell me all about yourself," I heard that you were adopted by a rich man who thought everything of you and was going to educate you, and do everything to make you happy."

Edith related, in a few words, the sad story we are already familiar with, and added that she should like a place to work in the mill; Mrs. Brown expressed her surprise and amusement at this last information, by bursting into a prolonged laugh; for Edith was so different from such a life, had been so tenderly brought up, and was withal, such a delicate little thing, it seemed ridiculous to her; so she leaned back in her chair and surveying Edith critically, she laughed hard.

Edith had endured all she could for one day, and giving way to the feeling of utter desolation which possessed her, she cried as if her heart would break. Mrs. Brown's laughter subsided at once and she said soothingly, "Poor little thing! don't cry. I will help you all I can to get a place in the mill, and in the mean time, I would like to have you stay with me, and help me some in the care of my baby. I was not laughing at you dear, but the thought of such a little thing as you working in a mill seemed strange, — that's all; I cannot realize it even now, said Mrs. Brown, abstractedly; "to think of Captain Lyton's little Edie working in a mill!"

The name of her father brought the tears again to

Edith's eyes, and Mrs. Brown kindly changed the subject.

One week passed quickly away, during which time Edith made herself very useful to Mrs. Brown. She took the baby out for long rides in her little carriage, and crocheted pretty edges for baby's clothes.

But Edith was impatient for an independent life, and worried not a little that she could obtain no employment. One day, a bright idea entered her head: she remembered having been sent for, one day, to see a gentleman and lady who had called at Aunt Laura's for the purpose of seeing her; she distinctly remembered how the lady had arisen, as she entered the room, and, scarcely waiting for an introduction, had pushed the hair back from her forehead, and after one long, lingering look, so earnest that she felt almost disconcerted by it, the lady had kissed her very tenderly, as she remarked, "I loved your mother very dearly, and was hoping you would look just like her," and Edith still seemed to hear the oft-repeated words of Aunt Laura, as she replied to Mrs. Able's remark, "Edith is all Lyton in disposition as well as looks." Mr. and Mrs. Able resided in a small city some twelve miles from where Edith was stopping, and to Mrs. Able Edith addressed a letter, telling her in a few words that she was very anxious to obtain employment, and said she would be under great obligations if Mrs. Able could render her any assistance; and after sending this letter she prepared to make a little visit to her native village, which was

situated just across the river from the place where Mrs. Brown lived.

It was the first time Edith had visited her old home since her father's death; and sad recollections filled her mind as she walked the once familiar street, which led past the pretty house which had once been her home.

It was a dreary fall day, and the moaning wind seemed like a voice from the past, whispering of its treasures lost forever, and murmuring sad forebodings for the future.

The honeysuckle — planted by hands that were calmly folded in their last long rest — trailed its leafless branches wildly, and seemed to say with very restless movement, "Passing away; passing away!"

Mrs. Oldham, the lady who had purchased the house of Captain Lyton, lived here still, and she gave Edith a warm welcome to her old home. Edith wandered through the well-remembered rooms, every one of which seemed like a monument recalling other and happier days. She seemed to see again the dear face of her mother, and to hear her sweet voice as she sung some old familiar hymn.

The churchyard was not far distant, and Edith soon found herself seated by her little brother's grave. The remains of little Harry had been brought from the West Indies and laid beside his little sister Alice, who had died some years before our story opened.

It would have been a great comfort to Edith to have visited her parents' graves, but this could not be as they had been buried on the island where they died.

A white slab marked the resting place of little Alice ; a beautiful hand was carved on the face of the stone, holding in its marble fingers a rose and three partly open buds, one of which was broken off, — an emblem of the early death of her to whose memory the stone had been erected. Under the hand was the simple word "Allie."

Long Edith sat absorbed by her sad reflections, forgetful of everything but the little graves beside her, and the memories which sprung from them.

At length a gentle voice close by her side aroused her, and looking around she was delighted to see her old friend Stella Farwell. They had been to school together when little slips of girls, had played with the same dolls, and sometimes, with a band of other little girls, they would go into the vestry of the old church yonder, and have a prayer-meeting all to themselves.

Edith was always the preacher, and after delivering a rousing discourse to very wide-awake hearers, she would exhort sinners forward for prayers, and sometimes they would become so earnest in their play, that her little audience would be melted into tears by the stirring words of the little preacher.

Stella Farwell would say to Edith after one of these meetings, "You ought to be a preacher when you grow up, Edith ; it is beautiful to hear you talk when you get so earnest."

Together Stella and Edith had tried to compose a poem ; it was decided, after much discussion, that the death of Stella's brother should be the subject. They

invested one cent in foolscap paper, and proceeded to business.

Stella wrote a very pretty little verse and it was purely original; but alas for Edith's abilities as a poetess, she wrote,

"Dearest brother, thou hast left us,
Here thy loss we deeply feel,
But 'tis God who has bereft us,
He can all our sorrows heal."

Stella was in raptures as she always was over Edith's achievements.

"If you can write like that now, Edith, when you are a little girl, what won't you be able to do when you are a woman?"

Edith received the praises of her friend with becoming meekness, and it was well she did so; for a few days after this, as they were walking in the same old burial ground, and reading with not a little difficulty the various inscriptions on the gravestones, they came to one which bore the very verse Edith had written. After slowly reading the first line aloud, they came to a sudden pause. Before Edith had recovered her speech, Stella said, "Why Edith, they have got your verse on this stone."

"I never composed that verse," said Edith, as the truth slowly dawned upon her, "but really and truly, Stella, I thought I did. I must have read it here a long time ago, and remembered it, and thought of it the first time I tried to write a verse."

Stella felt almost as sorry for Edith's inglorious defeat as if it had been her own.

Years had passed since then, and the little girls had seldom met, but time had never changed the warm regard they felt for each other.

"I just now called at Mrs. Oldham's, and was surprised when she told me I would find you here ; so I waited to hear no more, but came as fast as my feet would carry me. Dear Edith, I am so glad to see you ; tell me all about yourself. I have heard some few things concerning your life since we parted, but I long to hear it all from your own lips."

Long they talked, until the dew began to fall, when Stella said, "Come, Edith, go home with me and stay all night. Mother will be anxious to see you, I am sure."

After a little deliberation, Edith accepted the invitation.

Stella's mother was a lovely woman ; she had known Mrs. Lyton well, and loved her motherless child ; so Edith found kind words and sympathy in Stella's home.

After a few days, Edith returned to Mrs. Brown's, and, on her way there, stopped at the post-office, to see if there was a letter for her.

During the short time she had spent in her native village, she had been made to feel that Edith Lyton, the petted child of Captain Lyton, and Edith Lyton, his penniless orphan, were two people.

She was almost surprised, when the looked-for letter was handed to her ; the experience of the past few days had made her doubtful whether Mrs. Able would notice her little missive.

The letter was directed in a bold hand-writing. Edith opened it, with trembling fingers, and read the following:—

“DEAR MISS EDITH,— Your letter is at hand. My wife wishes me to extend to you a cordial invitation to come to our house, and make it your home for the present, and we will see what can be done about finding employment for you by-and-by. Mrs. Able requests me to say that her cousin, Sarah Lane, is visiting us now. Sarah is an old schoolmate of your cousin, Victoria Hazel, has often heard the family speak of you, and is anxious to see you. Come, if you can, on the one o'clock train, to-morrow; in that case you need not write, for I will be at the station to meet you; otherwise let us know when to expect you.

Very truly your friend,

SAMUEL ABLE.”

And so Edith's future was decided. The next day found her on the cars, the big bag by her side, bound for a new home, new friends, and varied experiences.

Mr. Able met her at the station, and quickly led the way to his carriage.

He was a man of medium height, slightly built; his hair was light, and his whiskers extremely red, and very long.

A short drive brought them to their destination. The house was a large one, with a piazza running across the front of it, the roof of which was supported

by immense pillars, which stood in a solemn row, like sentinels keeping guard.

The door was opened almost before they reached it, by Mrs. Able, who kissed Edith, and gave her a warm welcome ; before they had reached the back parlor, they were met by Mrs. Able's mother, a sweet-looking old lady, in a white cap, and black dress ; and, with much emotion, she clasped Edith in her arms as tenderly as if she was her own child, and said, "I want to see if you look like your mother. I loved your mother, dear, like one of my own children, and she always called me Ma Rushton."

"And I shall always call you Grandma Rushton," said Edith, in her sweet, musical voice.

Grandma Rushton kissed her again, and they passed on to the cosy back parlor.

It was a bright, cheerful room, as any room would be when Mrs. Able arranged the furniture, for she possessed rare taste in this direction.

Miss Lane was out when Edith arrived, but she soon after came tripping into the room, her cheeks as red as roses, from the cold autumn air.

"This is little Edith Lyton, cousin Sarah," said Mrs. Able

Sarah Lane was one of those who, without being strictly handsome, possessed such a wonderful power to fascinate, that one never thought of her beauty ; she filled a great space all around her ; when she came she brought a world of sunshine, and departing, left not a

ray. She was too selfish to give much if any affection, but absorbed all she could in all directions.

Sarah came forward in a much shorter time than it has taken to give this slight description of her, and said, in her most winning way, "We shall have to call her our little Edith, now, — shan't we, Cousin Lizzie?"

Mrs. Able assented, and Sarah continued, "I have heard your cousin Victoria speak of you often; your Cousin Vic. was a splendid scholar; we went to school together; outside of a book, she is almost good for nothing. But your Cousin Laura is a bright little thing, — very attractive to gentlemen, I hear."

And so Miss Lane talked on until tea was announced.

What a delicious supper it was; no one could make better biscuit than Mrs. Able, and to-night they were faultless, as was also the delicious quince jelly and fragrant tea, oyster stew, and various other good things.

Miss Lane was in her element at the tea-table; she sparkled with wit and fun, until Edith almost forgot her own troubles.

Supper over, Mr. Able seated himself at the organ and they had a delightful sing.

Mr. Able was one of those men who thought more highly of himself than others thought of him, and the consequence was, he was ever laboring under the impression that the world treated him shabbily.

He was a member of the church, and there, as well as elsewhere, he felt that his superior abilities were underrated. At the time Edith came into the family, Mr. Able was about forty-five years of age, and at this late

day had conceived the absurd idea of becoming a physician ; had he been gifted, as alas ! he was not, his age would have proved a sufficient hindrance for a reasonable man, but Samuel Able was not reasonable, so he pushed forward, regardless of age or any other obstacle.

Mrs. Able believed in her husband, to the utmost extent of her weak nature ; she had married him because she loved him, and placed not only her heart, but her fortune in his keeping. Grandma Rushton did not share her daughter's unbounded faith in Samuel Able, neither in his abilities as a man, or in his love for his wife ; hers was a more discriminating nature, and she believed that Lizzie's principle attraction to Mr. Able had been her money.

Notwithstanding Grandma Rushton's objections and expostulations, Mr. Able was going to a far distant city to study medicine.

So, on Edith's first evening there, the matter was discussed, and Sarah Lane encouraged him in her sweetest tones to go forward, while in her heart she ridiculed the whole matter.

The evening passed quickly away, and Sarah with Edith, retired to the room they were to share together.

"Poor little darling !" said Sarah, as she wound her arm around Edith. The weary child nestled close to her new friend, and, with her head upon Sarah's shoulder, fell asleep.

The few remaining days of Sarah's visit passed away, and Edith felt almost forsaken when the last good-bys were over, and she returned to the bright sitting-room,

which some way looked dreadfully dark, now that Sarah's presence would gladden it no more for a long time to come.

But the hurry and bustle attending Mr. Able's departure, kept them all occupied for the next few day.

During the few weeks Edith had been with Mr. and Mrs. Able, that good man had lost no opportunity to urge the necessity of Edith's becoming a Christian.

The young girl had suffered very much, and her heart was in a peculiarly susceptible condition.

One night Mr. Able, who was a class-leader in the Methodist church, asked Edith to accompany him to class-meeting. Edith replied to his invitation in a hesitating manner, "They always have to speak in class-meeting, do they not, Mr. Able?"

• "Yes, usually," said Mr. Able.

At length Edith decided to go. This was the first experience of the kind she had ever had, and it was a strange one to her.

They met in a private house, and the room appropriated to the meeting looked odd, with its rows of chairs; one after another the members began to gather, and they came into the room in such an oppressively solemn way, and sat very still, with one hand over their eyes, as if in profound meditation, that Edith felt the stillness oppressive.

Mr. Able commenced the meeting by singing that grand old hymn, which age will never make less beautiful,—

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

One after another of the voices joined with his, until the hymn was sung as Edith never had heard it before. Mr. Able asked one of the young brothers present to open the meeting with prayer. And it was a prayer so rich with love to God and man, that Edith never forgot it, nor the feelings it brought with it. And then they sung,

“ Oh, land of rest, for thee I sigh;
When will the moment come, *
When I shall lay my armor by,
And dwell with Christ at home ? ”

Then followed the various experiences, until the class-leader came to Edith. Every one had spoken, and all eyes were turned on the young girl, as she timidly rose, and said in a sweet, low voice, “ I cannot speak of a Christian experience, as you have all done ; but I can sincerely say, I strongly desire to experience the peace of which you have so beautifully spoken to-night, and I am determined to seek for it.”

The amens which followed these few words, so simply spoken, were almost deafening, and Mr. Able asked the young man who had made the opening prayer to pray for this young soul ; and he did pray with such earnestness, that it seemed as if the gates of heaven opened wide to let the wanderer in.

The meeting was over, and Edith's name was added to the class-book as a member on probation.

CHAPTER VI.

EDITH'S GIRLHOOD.

“A maid just passing through a charmed door, —
Childhood behind, womanhood just before;
A fawn-like manner, and a glance so shy,
I scarce can catch the color of her eye.”

Six months have passed since we left Edith in her new home, — six months of shadow and sunshine. Edith has grown very necessary to Grandma Rushton and Mrs. Able; so fond of her have they become that they cannot bear to have her leave them so often to attend meetings. Mrs. Able would say, when she would see Edith putting on her things, “Going to another meeting to-night Edith? I wish you would feel it your duty to stay home with us more;” and grandma would chime in, “I guess if there were no him's only those found in the hymn books Edith would not go so often,” for Grandma Rushton happened to know that Edith seldom came home unattended by some of the young brothers in the church.

To all such intimation Edith smiled without even a blush, as she replied gaily, “Really grandma, if the hymns in the book were not far more interesting than any I have found out of it, I should much rather stay with you;” and even grandma half believed her.

On Sunday Edith was always at church, and many eyes used to rest with interest on that sweet, upturned face, so earnest in its devotion.

Sometimes the minister would find himself preaching almost exclusive to those intense gray eyes, which seemed to reflect the very thoughts he uttered.

Now and then a cloud would shadow the face, as if the words were hard to understand, and required all the faith she could command to make them clear. Edith never did anything half way ; her's was a most earnest nature, and she carried her Christian experience into the most minute affairs of every-day life, and as her ideal was lofty she felt constantly dissatisfied with her progress toward a higher life.

Mr. Able came back to his home with a more exalted opinion of himself than he had ever before entertained ; for had he not been studying medicine ? and would he not soon be able to practice that same knowledge in a way which would astonish all his former acquaintances ?

He walked the streets with an air of importance, meeting his old friends with stiffness, undoubtedly intended for dignity, but which, to say the least, was freezing in the extreme.

Mrs. Able was more than ever impressed with the superior attainments of her husband, and straightway affixed the title of Doctor to his name, — a title which other people unintentionally or maliciously omitted, — an omission which caused much annoyance to the new doctor and his worthy wife.

Edith was still very anxious to earn her own living, and with this object in view, she consulted long and earnestly with Mr. Able ; he decided to see what he could do to help her obtain employment.

After considerable delay the desired place was found and Edith, for the first time in her life, stood before one who wished for her services.

Mr. Carter was a shrewd man of business, and had charge of the girls in the large confectionery manufactory where he was one of the firm.

"I am afraid this girl is too young" he said, giving Edith a searching glance. Mr. Able said, "Just give her a trial, Carter, I think she will suit you." Mr. Carter fixed his eyes once more on the young girl, with a prolonged stare, which made the color come in hot waves to her face.

After a silence, which seemed unendurable to Edith, he said, "You can come and try it Miss Lyton, and if you don't suit us we will not hesitate to tell you, and if you don't like the place you can leave at any time." Edith was delighted; first, because she had obtained the place, secondly, she was relieved from the searching glance of Mr. Carter's penetrating eyes.

Early the following day she started for the place where she was to commence her first actual experience of a business life.

So fearful was she of being late she reached the store before it was open, and had to linger some time before she could gain admittance.

The first work given Edith to do was sorting gum arabic, and the little hands flew nimbly at the task, but not more swiftly than her thoughts.

So utterly oblivious to all her surroundings was she, that the girls who worked with her, thought she was

proud, and felt above them and the work she was obliged to do.

And they decided to treat her with the same indifference they fancied she had shown them.

This was all lost on the innocent girl, for when they treated her with what they intended for freezing politeness, she always gave them such a sweet smile and gentle "thank you" they soon changed their minds.

Edith was the youngest and smallest girl there, and her winning ways soon made her the pet of the candy shop.

Mrs. Able would say, "People think that my mother and Edith are almost perfect, and they give me the reputation of being cross and ugly; but they don't know that Edith, with all her sweet ways, has more fire and fury wrapped up in her small frame than I have in my little finger; let her just get angry once, and the fire just flashes out of her eyes, and she makes everything give way before her; and my mother, with all her saintly looks, is a perfect hurricane when she is angry; but I get all the credit for being ugly, while people think mother is a saint and Edith an angel."

Edith good naturedly replied, "You know, Mrs. Abel, it is other people and not myself who have such a mistaken idea. I believe I am as conscious of my failings as any one can be."

Then Mrs. Able, having exhausted her wrath, would laugh and say, "You are none too spunky. I never liked tame people myself."

After Edith's cousins and aunt learned that she had

entered a family where she would probably find a permanent home, they felt they could afford to be friendly with her once more.

Laura wrote her a letter soon after her arrival at Mr. Able's.

Edith had tried hard to forget the past, or forgive it if she could not forget.

Thanksgiving Day was a great day with Mr. Hazel, and two years after Edith went to live with Mrs. Able, she received a most pressing invitation to spend Thanksgiving Day with the Hazel family. "Come by all means," wrote Laura, "for we all want to see you. Victoria will be home with her husband, and we want you to meet him, so don't say no. Grandma can hardly wait for the time to come, she is so anxious to see you, and for her sake, if not for ours, you will surely come."

Victoria had been married some year before, and at this time had forgotten or omitted to send her little cousin an invitation to attend the wedding; but Edith had learned the full particulars from Sarah Lane, who was present, and had formed, through Sarah's description, a very exalted opinion of Victoria's husband.

Edith decided to accept the invitation, so the night before Thanksgiving Day found her once more at Uncle Hazel's.

Laura greeted her cordially, and seemed jubilant with delight at meeting her cousin once more. Aunt Laura received her with that serenely placid expression which Edith remembered so well.

Victoria yawned, and said she hoped Edith would ex-

cuse her from rising, as she was completely exhausted. Grandma Hazel, poor old lady, who was now too feeble to leave her bed, was so glad to see her little pet lamb, as she used to call her, that she burst into tears. Edith stroked the wrinkled face, and soothed her, until she was calm once more.

Scarcely were the greetings over with Edith, when Victoria's husband arrived.

Colonel Faber was a noble looking man, a trifle above six feet in height, with light brown hair and blue eyes. Side whiskers and moustache of a slightly sandy tinge suited well to his complexion.

Victoria languidly rose and received her husband, and introduced him to Edith. Colonel Faber took the little hand she held out, telling her he was delighted to make her acquaintance.

The next day passed quickly, and somewhat sadly to Edith, for poor old Grandma was too sick to sit up, and Edith passed much of the time by her bedside.

A better acquaintance with Colonel Faber made Edith very fond of her new cousin, and he seemed equally pleased with her.

With many tears and misgivings Edith took leave of Grandma after her short visit was over.

"Should Grandma be any worse, you will let me know at once,—won't you, Aunt Laura?"

The promise was given promptly, and Edith returned home sadly, but feeling sure that she should see Grandma once more. . . .

It was a stormy day in January, the snow came sift-

ing down, first in fine flakes, gradually growing larger and larger, until the air was full of it.

"A despatch for Edith Lyton," said bustling Mr. Carter, entering the girl's room, and lying the yellow envelope on Edith's table.

Every eye was on her, as, with trembling fingers, she opened the message and read the few words which told her that Grandma was dead, and would be buried at W. on the following day.

Edith bowed her head on the lozenger table before her, and burst into a flood of tears.

The afternoon of the same day found her on her way to W.; reaching there, what was her surprise to find that Grandma's funeral would take place at her uncle's house in H.; so again she had been forgotten at a time when she felt the slight keenly.

A few of the village people went to the burial-ground, to pay the last token of respect to their old friend and neighbor, and Edith went with them.

Mr. Hazel and his wife and Laura followed the coffin, the two latter dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape veils sweeping nearly to their feet; while Edith, the only real mourner at that open grave, showed not a symbol of it in her dress.

"Would you like to look at the remains," said Mr. Hazel, addressing his niece.

She bowed her head in assent, and he gave orders for the coffin to be opened.

How calmly grandma slept! and how beautifully she looked to Edith, as, with a long, long, lingering look,

she bent over that still form, *so still!* in the awful hush of death.

For the first time, it occurred to Amos Hazel that it was not just the thing for Edith to come to her own grandma's funeral in this way; for a moment his sister Ella's face came vividly before him, and he felt, for the first time since her death, remorse for the neglect he had shown her child.

As the people turned to leave the burial-ground, Edith started to go with them; she had only glanced at her relatives once, and now she turned away without the slightest recognition.

Aunt Laura, or her daughter, would not have cared, but Amos Hazel did care, and, springing forward, he laid his hand on her shoulder and said, "Come, Edith, you must go home with us; I want to see you."

"Do not ask me, Uncle Hazel; I really cannot go."

Mrs. Hazel said, "Don't over-urge her, Amos; we should be pleased to have her go with us if she wishes, not otherwise."

Just then, an old friend of Edith's mother, who had been listening to the conversation, said gently, "I would go if I were you, Edith, your uncle feels so badly;" and so she entered the carriage and drove home with them.

Alas, how sad the house looked! Edith opened grandma's bible, and tried to find some comfort in its sacred pages; but here a verse was marked, and there a word was underlined, by a hand that would

never move again, and blinding tears hid the comforting words before her.

Edith left her uncle's house next day, and returned with a sad heart to Mrs. Able's.

That lady was indignant when she learned the full particulars relating to grandma's funeral. Could Aunt Laura and her daughter have heard the opinion she entertained of them, they would have shrunk immeasurably in their own estimation.

Mr. Able came home occasionally during the first two years Edith was a member of the family; after that time, having gained, as he thought, sufficient medical skill, he went to a far away town to begin practise, and, for the three following years, was away from home all the time.

If there was one thing above another which Mrs. Able deemed a great misfortune, it was for a girl to remain unmarried at a proper age.

Although Edith was still young, Mrs. Able viewed with displeasure her indifference to all the gentlemen who honored her with their attentions.

"I never saw such a girl," she exclaimed, impatiently. "I would just like to see the man you would fall in love with."

"And so should I," slyly replied Edith.

"Well, you never will," said Mrs. Able; "who do you expect to marry, anyway, Edith?"

"I expect to be an old maid, if worst comes to worst," she laughingly replied. "I shall never marry

just for the sake of having Mrs. on my tombstone, I am sure of that."

Time passed swiftly away, and Edith reached her nineteenth birthday.

She was born the second day of January, so she commenced the new year with another year of her life.

"Nineteen years old to-day," she said, dreamily, fingering the leaves of her new diary.

"I was married before I was twenty," said Mrs. Able.

"I guess I shall be many years past twenty before I am married, if ever I am," Edith replied.

"I don't know about that," said Mrs. Able; "one year brings great changes sometimes."

Edith still continued to work in the same place, and her life was an exceedingly quiet one for a young girl; she seldom went anywhere but to her much-prized meetings. Sometimes she would attend a church social, but she invariably came away weary and disgusted; instead of real social gatherings, they were anything else.

The church to which Edith belonged, unfortunately for her, and for all the other members, was a house divided against itself; the frequent quarrels and bickerings in which its members were ever engaging, made Edith sick at heart.

Sometimes she would ask herself if there was any such thing as real religion; then the memory of her mother's life would come to her, so radiant with its purity and holiness, that all doubts were hushed for the time being.

Edith often found herself thinking of the little half-brother so far away. Soon after her father's death she had received two letters from his widow, and beautiful letters they were, full of heart-breaking sorrow for the dead, and love for the child now motherless and fatherless.

Edith had written once, and then her uncle advised her to let the correspondence drop. So, as it was quite expensive to send letters there, and Edith had no money, she stopped writing.

But now, as she grew older, her thoughts often turned to the little half-brother, who had never known a sister's love, and to his mother, who had once written such tender, loving words to her, but, whether living or dead, she knew not; finally she decided to write a letter to her father's widow, and send it to the old address, trusting to fate in its reaching the one addressed. The letter was duly written and sent.

Days, weeks, and months, passed, bringing no answer, until Edith dismissed the matter from her mind, and remembered little Harry and his mother as a dream of the past.

CHAPTER VII.

PHILIP BURTON.

MRS. ABLE'S house was a large one, and soon after Mr. Able left his home to study medicine, his wife was constantly besieged with applicants for furnished rooms.

The civil war was just at an end, and the little sleepy city of S. was waking to an earnest bustling life; business increased so rapidly, that the many people flocking there to fill various positions, found it almost impossible to find shelter, and were obliged to pay enormous prices for the same when obtained.

Thus it was that Mrs. Able, whose purse was not so full as it ought to have been, owing to the poor management and long continued demands of her husband, decided to let furnished rooms.

It was Fast-day, and even the little birds seemed to sing with a subdued twitter. A hush, like that which pervades every New England city, on the Sabbath, had settled in its refreshing calmness over S. The solemn tone of the church bells called the inhabitants to worship.

Mrs. Able and Edith were not going to attend church this lovely day, but were preparing to take a walk.

"Have you seen our new lodger, Edith," said Mrs. Able.

"Yes ; I met him in the hall this morning."

"Don't you think he is a fine-looking man, Edith ?"

"I can hardly remember how he looked ; but he was very pleasant, and excused himself as we almost run against each other."

"He has a pretty name too, Edith, — Philip Burton, — and mother says he looks and appears like her cousin, Philip Brown, who met such a tragic death years ago."

Edith replied that she hoped Mr. Burton would be more fortunate than the one he resembled, and they passed on to other subjects, as they commenced their walk.

After their return home that afternoon, Grandma Rushton said, "Mr. Burton came down stairs and asked if I could lend him a book to read. I invited him into the library, and he selected Shakespeare. I think he is a nice young man ; he talked to me as kindly as if I had been his own grandmother."

Mrs. Able was tired after her long walk, so, after their early supper, she lay down on the sofa and was soon fast asleep, while grandma snoozed quietly in her big arm-chair.

Edith left the sleepers for a quiet nap, while she seated herself on a low ottoman, in one of the long windows of the front parlor. Her nimble fingers flew rapidly, as she drew the bright colors in and out of the canvas on which she was at work, weaving lovely roses, buds, and leaves in her progress.

The shadows of the coming night were fast making farther work impossible, when a light rap at the door was quickly answered by Edith, who beheld Mr. Burton, with the borrowed book in his hand.

"Excuse me," he said, "if I intrude. I called to return this volume."

"You are very excusable," said Edith; "I hope you have been entertained by it."

"Thank you. I am always entertained when I have time and opportunity to read Shakespeare."

Edith took the offered volume, and stood waiting to close the door upon the intruder; but Philip Burton had no intention of being shut out.

He was a thorough man of the world, had travelled much, and understood human nature well; his knowledge of the latter had not made him kind in his judgment of people generally; he knew how to please, and delighted to do so when he had an object to gain by so doing.

The night after his arrival at Mrs. Able's he had seen Edith for the first time. Philip Burton could never see a pretty face without being more or less attracted in that direction.

On this occasion, he had lingered almost without an excuse in Mrs. Able's pleasant sitting-room, hoping for an introduction to Edith; but that young lady was busy writing in her diary; she had not given him a look, much less a thought.

Since then, he had seen her several times, but she never noticed him; and each time they met, his desire for a better acquaintance increased, until, grown impatient by the delay, he decided to wait no longer. On the morning of this same day he had managed to intro-

duce himself, by running against her in the hall, and apologizing handsomely for the apparent accident.

Unobserved by her he had seen her, as he entered the house a few moments before he rapped at the parlor door.

The quiet dignity of her manner, combined with such entire unconsciousness of her own personal charms, made her irresistible to this man, who had sneered at the word love, and laughed to scorn all belief in woman's purity.

After a moment's pause, which would have been exceedingly awkward but for Mr. Burton's ease of manner, Edith said, "Will you walk in, Mr. Burton? excuse me for not inviting you before."

The invitation was gladly accepted, and soon his easy conversation overcame all the embarrassment of the occasion.

Edith learned that Mr. Burton was never in S. before, that he was an orphan, had been a captain in the army, had but two sisters, of whom he was very fond, and furthermore, that he had entered the employ of Kellogg and Baxter with the intention of entering the firm after six months, if he desired to make S. his permanent home.

On the evening of Fast-day, the pews of the church where Edith was a member, were to be rented, and Mrs. Able and Edith were going so as to secure their pew. As the church bell gave warning that it was time to go, Edith said, "It is growing dark, Mr. Burton, will you please come into the back parlor with me, and light the

gas for me? Mrs. Able and Grandma Rushton have had quite a nap, and I am sure will feel obliged to us for waking them. This is Mr. Burton, Mrs. Able and grandma. Here's a match, Mr. Burton; you have the advantage in being tall, I have to stand on a chair when I reach the chandelier."

In an instant the room was one blaze of light, and Edith, for the first time, took a good look at her visitor, and so will we.

He was a tall man, lacking little of six feet, splendidly proportioned, possessing uncommon grace of movement; his hair was dark and wavy, or seemed to be dark, unless the sunshine fell upon it, when it had a reddish tinge all through it; he had blue eyes, neither dark nor light, but full of witchery, and seemed to conceal in their hidden depths much that Philip Burton, left to himself, would never reveal; a silky moustache adorned his lip, which hid partially, but did not conceal the scornful curve of the mouth.

Edith possessed a quick, intuitive knowledge of people she met for the first time, and while she felt a certain attraction for this man, she experienced, also, a feeling of repulsion, for which she was unable to account.

After a little general conversation, in which Mrs. Able and Grandma Rushton joined, Edith explained to Mr. Burton that Mrs. Able and herself would be obliged to excuse themselves, to attend the church meeting, but added that grandma would be delighted to have his company.

But Mr. Burton gracefully refused, pleading a previous engagement, and quickly withdrew.

"How do you like Mr. Burton, Edith," said Mrs. Able.

"I like him, and I don't like him, both."

"What a strange girl you are Edith ; I don't see anything to dislike in him, I am sure ;" and here the matter rested for this time.

The next day, Edith received a note from Mr. Burton, very elegantly written and worded, inviting her to attend a concert with him.

Edith was vexed at the man's assurance, and did not vouchsafe a reply, for which lack of politeness Mrs. Able was vexed.

"You are the strangest child," she said ; "almost any girl would be pleased to be noticed by such a gentleman as he."

"But," insisted Edith, "he is a stranger to me, and I do not wish to accept attentions from him until we are better acquainted."

"Stuff and nonsense," said Mrs. Able ; "you will never be very well acquainted with him or any other man, I fancy. You might have been mistress of your own beautiful home, riding to-day in your carriage, instead of drudging in that old candy shop, if you had been guided by me ; but just because Arthur Winslow was not quite up to your standard, you threw away as good a chance as a girl ever had."

"Then there was Ned Bolton, as fine a young man as there is in the city of S. or any other city. Poor Ned ! he worshipped the ground you walked on, — more fool

he,— but you could not marry him because you did not love him. I think I could bend my love a little when it was for my interest to do so. Now here is a man who is your equal in all things, your superior in many, but you can't accept attentions from him, because you are not acquainted ; but there is no use talking, you will do just as you please in spite of me."

Edith listened to this long address with conflicting emotions ; was she really the worst girl in the world, she wondered. In refusing the offers Mrs. Able had alluded to, she had acted up to her highest conception of right. But then people are so mistaken sometimes when they think they are right.

It had been a most uncomfortable existence to her since she entered the candy shop. Mrs. Able looked upon work as disgraceful, and was anxious to see Edith comfortably settled in a home of her own, where the stigma of shop would not attach to her ; others regarded the matter in the same light ; so, although Edith was not ashamed of her work, or the necessity which compelled it, yet she was constantly made to feel degraded by it.

Edith thought, until the longer she dwelt upon the vexatious subject the more completely confused her ideas became.

It was too late now to answer Mr. Burton's note, but she decided to accept his attentions in future should he offer them.

On the following Sunday morning, while Edith was preparing for church, Mr. Burton entered the back parlor, and when Edith came in, a half hour later, she

found him reading the Bible to grandma. He was a fine reader, and Edith seated herself quietly and listened. Not until the last word was reached did he raise his eyes, or in any way recognize her, and then only an indifferent "good morning, Miss Edith." Day after day passed, and Edith received no especial attention from the new lodger; but she listened to his praises unceasingly. Grandma Rushton thought him almost perfect. "Where will you find a young man who will sit down as he does, and read the Bible and guide to holiness to an old woman like me," she would say.

Mrs. Able was as fond of him in her way as was grandma. She made no profession of religion, and was fond of attending the theatre. When Mr. Burton became aware of this fact, and, further, that she would not refuse his escort, he was ready to take her to every new play which came to the city.

After a time he began to show Edith more attention, and unbending from his formal politeness treated her more as a friend.

There was one point on which they were perfectly congenial, and this was their mutual love of poetry. It was Philip Burton who gave Edith the little blue and gilt volume, "Lucille," and Edith read and dreamed, until so absorbed was she in her precious book that she forgot all outward things, and lived for days in a delicious dream.

Philip laughed, and declared that he was fully prepared to see her become a nun, and so their friendship grew.

The feelings which possessed Edith when she first

met Mr. Burton, had never left her ; strongly attached on the one hand, and repelled on the other. When with him, she was magnetized by him into the belief that she really cared for him ; and when removed from his personal influence, she felt sure that he was nothing, and never could be anything, to her.

One day they wandered out for a walk. He was strangely tender, and Edith felt dimly that her life was hardly the tame one it had been before she met him.

To a lovely little spot, on the bank of the noble river which bordered one side of the city, they bent their steps. Edith seated herself on the moss-covered trunk of a tree, which lay just where it had fallen some years before, while Philip threw himself on the grass at her feet.

He talked of home, and father and mother long since dead, and his voice grew low and tremulous when he recalled recollections of his mother. This was a tender point with Edith, for her mother's name was ever a charmed word to her.

Her face, always so full of the thoughts behind it, looked angelic to Philip Burton as the deep and tender eyes, so misty with their tears, shone softly upon him.

It is true he had laughed at love, and believed nothing in it ; but just then, he felt that he would give all the world for Edith Lyton's love.

And so he told her of his mother, of her death, of his reckless life since then, and told her, too, of his mad worshipful love for her ; ever since his eyes fell upon her, he had loved her, and when he found that she met his

advances coldly, he had tried to forget her, or conquer his love, and how all in vain had been the struggle.

He told her his whole future life was in her hands for weal or woe, and begged her, as she valued a human soul, to stoop from her pure height and save him.

His earnestness frightened her. Rising slowly she said, "Take me home, Mr. Burton, I am sick."

"No, Edith, no. You must not, you shall not leave me like this. I must and will have my answer. I do not ask you to love me, only be my wife. I will win your love through all the long years which stretch beyond. Oh, trust me darling! you are the one love of my life; no other man could love you as I do; no one could shield you from every care and trouble as I will. It is not your form and face that I love so intensely, but the pure, earnest soul which looks at me every time you raise your beautiful eyes to mine.

Edith, with one arm round a tree, was leaning against it for support. She had never witnessed anything like this before, and her whole nature was roused with conflicting emotions as she beheld this strong man's agony.

At length he noticed her distress, and said very gently, "Forgive me, darling, I have frightened you; I should have been more careful; speak to me, little girl. Did you say you were sick, and ask me to take you home?"

"I am so bewildered, Philip."

This was the first time she had ever called him by that name, and it sounded like music to his ears.

"I don't wonder you are bewildered, child," he said, as he gently drew her towards him. "Look up, pet,

see ! I am calm, and will be for your sake ; but tell me Edith, is there no hope ?”

She slowly raised her eyes to his face, as she said, “I do not feel as you do ; I hardly think I love you.”

“I do not expect you to feel as I do ; I do not wish it ; only promise me that sometime in the blessed future, you will be my wife.”

There was silence so long that Philip Burton could distinctly count the throbbings of his own heart before she spoke again. At last she said.

“I don’t know what to say, Philip. Should I promise to be your wife, I feel I should be doing wrong, — very wrong.”

“Well, you can promise this, little one ; if you never see any one you love any better than you love me, you will do as I wish.”

“Yes, Philip, I can promise that, but it seems as if you were giving so much, and getting almost nothing.”

“If I am satisfied, you surely need not complain, darling.”

And so Edith’s engagement commenced. Edith told Mrs. Able of her conditional promise, and added, “I fear I have done very wrong.”

“Pshaw !” said Mrs. Able ; “I will risk its being wrong ; if you become sick of your bargain, it is the easiest thing in the world to break your engagement.”

Edith felt ill at ease ; and now that she was removed from the wonderful magnetism of Philip Burton’s presence, she was frightened at the step she had taken.

Long after Mrs. Able was quietly sleeping, Edith tried

vainly to look her future in the face, and to determine its probable or possible ending : but the future was a sealed book, and like Peter of old, she seemed to be walking on a sea of uncertainty and doubt, and as the waves threatened her destruction, she cried out as the apostle did, " Lord save me, or I perish."

Edith was, indeed, launched on a tempestuous sea when she promised conditionally to be Philip Burton's wife.

He was naturally of a jealous disposition, and now that he possessed some claim on Edith, he was a perfect tyrant. If a gentleman showed her the slightest attention, he visited the offence upon poor Edith's head with unceasing reproof. At length this became unendurable, and after a long, fierce dispute over some trifling thing, Edith told him clearly that henceforth she cancelled all former promises, and hereafter they would be friends, and nothing more.

Then followed such a storm of passion as Edith never before had witnessed ; but she stood firm.

A few days passed, during which Edith and Philip did not meet. Mrs. Able was loud in her sympathy for Philip.

" Poor fellow ! " she said, " you ought not to treat him so, Edith ; he is almost crazy."

" Treat him how ? " said Edith.

" You know what I mean, Edith. You two have had some trouble, there is no use denying it."

" I do not deny it," said Edith.

They met again ; Philip was all sorrow for the past

and promised anything, everything, for the future, but Edith refused to enter into the engagement again. After long hours of struggling against his love and misery, worn out by his persistency, she yielded.

The following day Philip placed a beautiful ring upon her finger, saying as he did so, "This seals you mine forever, darling; not conditionally, Edith, but entirely; promise me."

Edith was fast learning to fear her impetuous lover, and to dread, beyond everything else, his anger. So she gave the promise, feeling, as she did so, that she was fast drifting from all that seemed worth living for.

For a time he seemed satisfied, and loved his idol more rapturously than ever; and, as Edith yielded more and more to his tyranny to avoid trouble, everything went more smoothly.

Philip desired a speedy marriage, and the faint hope Edith had never relinquished that some unforeseen event would occur to prevent her from being Philip Burton's wife, died away. She began to feel a certain apathy steal over her; she had struggled long and hard against the fate impending, and this was the reaction.

When Philip talked of being married on Edith's birthday, two months from the present time, Edith hardly raised an objection, and Mrs. Able agreed with Philip, that this would be a desirable arrangement.

So the matter was decided, and Edith left the old candy-shop, where she had passed so many sad as well as happy hours, and began to make preparations for her wedding.

To her heavy heart it seemed more like the sadness connected with a funeral, than the joyous notes of the marriage bells.

Philip was as devoted as a lover could be; when he was by her side she felt that she loved him, that he was necessary to her happiness.

About this time he changed his residence, going to the city of H. to live, and Edith was left more and more to herself during the few weeks preceding her marriage; but the hurry and bustle attending this great event of her life could not crowd out many sad forebodings from her mind.

Sarah Lane had been married some years before this, and had sacrificed all the noblest instincts of her womanhood on the shrine of wealth and position; she had learned since then to measure people by the length of their pocket-books, or the height of their social standing.

The last time she was at Mrs. Able's, Edith's approaching marriage was discussed, and Sarah said, "Now Edith, if you don't let me know when the wedding comes off, I will never forgive you."

It was Edith's wish for a quiet wedding, but Mrs. Able wanted to invite their friends, and have a social time; so the latter plan was decided upon.

Edith's cousins did not find it convenient to come, and Sarah Lane sent her regrets; so, like the supper of old, we read of in the Bible, "those who should have been nearest and dearest to her, at this interesting period of her life, began to make excuses."

Edith's wedding-day was cloudless ; a mantle of snow covered the whole earth, and softly nestled in the branches of the trees and shrubs. How pure and spotless God's great world appeared, as Edith raised her curtain and looked out upon it.

Twenty years old to-day ! how much had transpired since one short year ago, when she watched from this same window a grand old snow-storm, and wondered what the fresh new year would bring her ; and it had brought so much ; she leaned her head against the window-sash, and tried to realize the whole of the new position in which she found herself, but all in vain ; naught but chaos and confusion filled her brain.

Sinking upon her knees beside her bed, where she had so often prayed before, she tried to pray, but all was blackness ; she tried to ask God's blessing on the strange and doubtful future, but the heavens seemed like brass, and no light came.

Her bewildered reflections were cut short by the energetic voice of Mrs. Able.

"Come, Edith child, where are you ? breakfast has been ready for the last half hour. I never knew you to be so late before."

"This is a perfect day for your wedding-day," said grandma, as Edith entered the room. "If your life is as beautiful as this day, you will be very happy."

A little present was left at the door for Edith, that morning, in the shape of a lovely handkerchief-box. Enclosed, was a neatly folded sheet of paper, on the outside of which was written, the compliments of the

giver; unfolding it, she read with delight the following beautiful poem, written expressly for her: —

TO EDITH OVER THE WAY,

ON HER WEDDING DAY.

“’Tis a fair and childish brow,
Wreathed with bridal flowers now;
And a serious, timid grace
Seems to gather on the face;
For the solemn words are spoken,
Never, trust we, to be broken.

Blessings on thee, bonny bride,
Prayers and blessings multiplied;
Sacred promise, holy vow,
Each to each ye’ve given now;
Vowed to honor, love, and cherish,
Till this changeful life shall perish.

Trusting, loyal little wife!
Farewell now the girlish life!
Farewell all its childish joys, —
All that maiden thought employs!
With another’s fate is blended
Thine, henceforth, till fate is ended.

No foreboding, doubt, or fear,
Clouds for thee the blithe New Year;
Be it fraught with weal or woe,
Smiles or tears, we may not know;
Yet we tenderly confide thee,
To the strong, fond heart beside thee.

May this tender new relation
Make all happy compensation
For the loss of father, mother,
Gentle sister, loving brother,

And the husband be to you
Ever noble, good, and true.

Heaven's eternal care be o'er thee,
Whatsoever be before thee!
Angel's fold their wings above thee,
And the good Lord ever love thee;
And a happy *useful* life,
Crown the bride a perfect wife."

Tears filled Edith's eyes as she finished the last word, and, bowing her head in her hand, she said amen to the loving words.

The ceremony was to take place at eight o'clock, and the whole day was filled with the hurry and bustle of preparation.

Very lovely Edith looked in her bridal robes; her shining brown hair was arranged in puffs, and lovely flowers fastened the cobweb veil to her head; long, shimmering folds of soft blue silk encircled her graceful form, and gave a look of almost ethereal loveliness to her fair face.

Edith hardly heard the solemn words of the minister, until the awful, irrevocable, "I pronounce you husband and wife," rung out upon her ears, making her start and shudder.

The congratulations quickly followed the prayer, and a strange thrill passed through her frame, as the minister wished them joy, and introduced them to the company as Mr. and Mrs. Burton.

Then came the supper, and after that the travelling-dress and good-byes; and Edith found herself in the swiftly moving cars, seated by Philip Burton's side, bound for her new life.

Very tender was the new husband of his fairy wife. "Poor little girl!" he said, "it has been a very hard, exciting day for her, now she shall rest. You are all my own, darling, my precious little wife! No one can ever come between us now; thank God for that!"

The same powerful attraction she had ever felt for Philip Burton was around her now, like a spell, stronger than any feeling of repulsion she had ever felt; she nestled closer to his side, and felt a certain satisfaction in his love.

So Edith entered the mystical relations of her new life.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WRETCHED LIFE.

Six months have passed since the events recorded in our last chapter. Edith's life since then has been one whirl of trouble and excitement.

But one short month after her marriage, she had learned the dreadful truth, that her husband was a gambler and a drunkard. She would start like a frightened fawn when his quick, restless step fell on her ear; for she could not foretell in what condition he would meet her, when, at the midnight hour, or later still, he returned to his poor girl-wife who waited so anxiously for him.

Intoxicating ~~drnk~~ did not cause Philip Burton to

stagger, but it made him as ugly and heartless as a fiend. Edith had learned to make no opposition to him when in this state, for it was worse than useless.

They had begun life in a fashionable boarding-house in the city of H—, where Philip held a good position. But his fast, reckless life soon unfitted him for business, and he lost his situation.

Mrs. Able, learning of his dissipated life, regretted that she had influenced the marriage, and tried to cover her own want of judgment, by throwing the blame upon Edith. She wrote a letter to Mr. Able, telling him of Philip's reckless life, and added that she had done her utmost to save Edith from such a marriage, but her efforts had been unavailing, and Edith had no one to blame but herself, whatever her future might be.

She made these same statements to her own and to Edith's friends, but failed to make them believe the cowardly falsehood ; for most of their friends knew of the intimacy existing between Mrs. Able and Mr. Burton, and many of them had listened again and again to her glowing praises of him.

Edith's cup was full ; it was hard to suffer for another's folly ; this she had borne in silence.

During the few weeks Edith spent with Mrs. Able after Philip lost his position in H—, Mrs. Able said to her one day, "Edith, don't ever dare say that I influenced your marriage."

This was more than human endurance could bear, and Edith replied with flashing eyes, "Mrs. Able, I have never said one word to you or to anyone about this mat-

ter, but if you goad me to it, I will tell you just what I think of you, and of the whole affair."

Mrs. Able knew that she was treading on dangerous ground, and dared not reply. Soon after this conversation, Philip secured a position in W., and sent for Edith.

He was jubilant with delight to have his little wife with him once more. Edith had never been in this city before, and she was charmed with the lovely view from their window. On the window-sill sat a beautiful rose-bush, in full bloom, the fragrance of which filled the dingy room. "I knew you were fond of flowers, pet," he said, "so I brought this home yesterday."

The room was a striking contrast to the pleasant home she had so long enjoyed with Mrs. Able. It was an attic chamber, with slanting ceiling, formed to accommodate the shape of the roof. The furniture consisted of a small stand, covered with a scrupulously white spread, over which hung an old-fashioned mirror; a cheap bedstead, two chairs, and a large, hospitable-looking rocking-chair, completed the furniture.

Edith had glanced with dismay upon this uncompromising apartment, when her quick eye for the beautiful discovered the lovely plant; and soon the magnificent view from her lofty window, dissipated all thoughts of the room and its occupants. Gazing through the swaying branches of the trees, which cast their shadows on her face, far away, over houses, streets, and people, she could see the loveliest green fields, and, farther still were mountain ranges, on whose steep sides grew trees of almost endless variety of kind and color.

And ever after the first moment when Edith stood entranced before this lovely prospect, this window was her delight ; many a heart ache was soothed, many a longing was hushed to rest by the beauty of this scene.

A few weeks passed, during which time Edith's husband lost no opportunity of making her wretched, until her life seemed unendurable, and she determined to make a desperate effort to free herself from Philip Burton. With this in view she addressed a letter to her cousin, Victoria Faber, who was passing some time at her father's home in H. Victoria promptly answered the letter, and promised to aid her in an attempt to escape from her terrible life, and even enclosed a few dollars which she hoped would help her carry forward her determination.

At last all plans being arranged, Edith went to Mrs. Tyler, the lady who rented them the room that they occupied, and made known her intention of leaving W. "Yes," she said, tremulously, "I am going to leave my husband. I had thought to go without saying a word to you, but your kindness has touched me deeply, and I could not bear to go without expressing my gratitude for it."

Mrs. Tyler was a thoroughly good woman, and she knew more of Philip Burton and his wicked career than Edith supposed, and was not much surprised that Mrs. Burton could endure such a life no longer ; so she said, 'Never mind telling me more, Mrs. Burton. I understand it all. God bless you, wherever you may go,' and tears fell from this good woman's eyes as she kissed Edith good-by.

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When Philip entered his room, on the day of Edith's departure, he was surprised to find no Edith, and nothing belonging to her. A little note lay on the table, and eagerly opening it he read, —

"I am leaving you forever, Philip; do not seek to bring me back; remember, if the past has resulted so terribly for us both, the future could be no better. Only yesterday you said you no longer loved me, surely then you cannot wish me near you. You will find my wedding and engagement rings lying beside this note; do as you please with them. I shall never wear them again. And so, farewell. Forgive me that I could not hold you to a higher, better life, and think sometimes kindly of your most unhappy wife,

"EDITH BURTON."

Philip Burton was wild with excitement; he would find her, or failing to do so, he would blow his brains out, and end his wretched life; and calling the help of a detective he endeavored to find his wife.

Long before Philip's eyes perused this note, Edith was on her way to H. It seemed to her over-strung nerves that the cars never moved so slowly before; but at length the tiresome journey was accomplished, and she reached her destination. Victoria informed her, as soon as she had removed her things, that she was too sensitive to hear about her troubles; that her nerves were not equal to it; and Edith kept silent, although it seemed as if her heart would break.

Hardly had the shades of night begun to gather, when Philip Burton rang the bell at Mr. Hazel's house.

At first, Edith refused to see him, but her Uncle Hazel becoming exhausted with his importunity, asked Edith to come into the room.

The meeting between Philip and Edith was exceedingly trying to her; after listening patiently to all he had to say, she replied, "Philip, I have borne much, very much since I became your wife; when I decided to leave you, it was a decision you forced upon me, and I consider it final."

Philip plead with all the eloquence he could command. At last, worn out with his strong will, Edith appealed to Uncle Hazel.

Amos Hazel cleared his throat with much decision, and gave it as his profound conviction that it was a solemn thing to get married, and consequently a very serious thing to break a marriage contract. "In this case, Edith, I think it is your duty to give your husband one more trial; but," he continued, looking fixedly at Philip, "I knew Edith's mother and father before her, and remember, if she ever has cause to take this step again, she will abide by it, and you will not have power to change her decision."

Philip promised that never in the future should Edith have cause to regret returning to him.

It was no small trial to one of Edith's sensitive nature to return to W. with the stigma of runaway wife attached to her; but she stifled her feelings and braved the matter through.

Edith was the observed of all on the following evening, when she took her place at the supper-table.

Mrs. Waldo, the woman who kept the boarding-house where they took their meals, was one of Mr. Burton's ardent admirers ; when this lady learned that Mrs. Burton had left her husband, she was on a pinnacle of excitement as to the possible cause. She called on Mrs. Tyler who lived across the street, to ascertain if possible, more concerning Mrs. Burton and her hasty departure. "What can the foolish child be thinking of," she exclaimed, looking over the tops of her glasses ; but he can bring her back, and I hope he will ; to think of her leaving such a man as he is ; why, Mrs. Tyler, there is not a gentleman at my table who begins to treat his wife with the attention Mr. Burton shows her ; if she ever does come back, I shall ask her all about it."

Mrs. Waldo had rattled on so fast, that Mrs. Tyler could not get in a word edgeways ; at this point she stopped for want of breath.

Mrs. Tyler quietly said, "I do not know what Mrs. Burton's reasons for leaving her husband were, but I believe she had sufficient reason ; she is not the mere child you take her for, and I am sure if she returns, and you interfere in any way with her business, she will resent it."

Mrs. Waldo cleared her throat with a significant "ahem !" and departed.

That good lady was eagerly watching when Mr. and Mrs. Burton took their usual seats at her table ; she gave Mrs. Burton a scrutinizing glance from behind her shin-

ing spectacles, but, save that Edith was very pale, she could detect no change in her ; for she was as quietly self-possessed as if nothing had happened, while Philip Burton was his same easy self.

The six weeks which followed were such delightful ones to Edith that she never forgot them, and she begun to hope that she might yet be very happy.

There were no more of the old weary nights of watching for a step that long delayed its coming. They read together, and took long, delightful walks after Philip's work was over.

Alas, for Edith's short-lived happiness! Philip soon found this life too tame for him, and plunged even deeper into vice and strong drink.

The Hazel family decided that Edith, with her fast accumulating troubles, was not a desirable relative to possess, so their letters were short and far between. Mrs. Able wrote an occasional letter, sometimes indifferent and sometimes affectionate, just as the spirit moved her.

Mrs. Tyler, at whose house Edith continued to room, was her fast friend. Mrs. Burton never spoke of her troubles, but Mrs. Tyler was not blind ; once Edith bore the mark of her husband's hand across her cheek for hours ; this did not escape the quick eye of Mrs. Tyler, who mentioned the matter to Mr. Tyler, who was so incensed that he wanted to wreak vengeance on the head of the offender with his own strong fist ; but his more prudent wife saw the folly of such an exposure, and persuaded her husband to let the matter rest.

Edith often sat alone in her dreary little room, trying at times to read her bible ; but her over-burdened brain refused to comprehend its sacred words : reverently laying the book down, she would bow her weary head on her clasped hands, and try to pray, but the whirl of terrible thoughts surging over her, seemed to drown in their turmoil the petition she vainly tried to offer.

Long she would remain kneeling, unconscious of the passing time, until, cramped and benumbed, she would rise, and with an almost insane light in her flashing eyes, would pace the room ; finally her weary limbs would stop their tiresome march, sinking down by the open window, to watch and wait until some passing footfall made her start in terror, and she knew not which she dreaded most, to hear him coming, or to wait for him.

At last he's coming, and how ?—drunk or sober ?—kind or ugly ? his hand is on the latch ; she has forgotten in this moment of terror to unfasten the door ; with oath after oath he kicks against it ; her trembling fingers turn the key, and Philip Burton crosses the threshold ; his eyes are bloodshot and his face is red and bloated. The first word he utters to the trembling girl before him is an oath which makes her blood curdle ; after upbraiding her in the most profane language for sins of which her pure soul was as guiltless as an infant, he sinks into a drunken slumber.

When the morning dawns, Philip Burton awakes. This heavy, unrefreshing sleep leaves him in no agreeable mood, and woe unto the little wife if she offends the brute she calls her husband.

Day after day of sorrow, night after night of wretchedness, have made fierce inroads on Edith's health.

About this time she formed the acquaintance of a lady and her husband by the name of Wallace ; this new friendship was in a measure her salvation, for although Mrs. Wallace and Edith never exchanged a word concerning any personal matter, Mrs. Wallace was a keensighted woman and knew more than Edith would have been willing to believe.

In this lady's pleasant little home Edith was ever a welcome guest ; here she found just the reaction from care and trouble she so much needed.

Mrs. Wallace was full of fun, ever ready with a witty answer, and Edith, who possessed a keen sense of the ridiculous, laughed almost as heartily at some of Mrs. Wallace's witticisms, as if her own life was not clothed in sackcloth and ashes.

One day Mrs. Wallace called on Edith to invite her to take a walk with her.

Philip Burton was at home, for he had given up all business, and was openly living the life of a gambler ; he vainly tried to frame some excuse to keep his wife at home, but Mrs. Wallace was not easily baffled. " Come Mr. Burton," she said, " there's no use in talking, your wife is going out with me. You ought to be obliged to me for getting her out ; she is as pale as a ghost ; everybody notices it but you." So Philip said no more, and many a delightful walk they enjoyed in each other's society.

One winter day as Edith and Mrs. Wallace were walk-

ing through Main street, they descried Philip Burton dashing towards them with an elegant turnout; seated by his side was a brazen courtesan who, unknown to Edith, was well-known by reputation to Mrs. Wallace.

Philip Burton met the eye of Mrs. Wallace for an instant as he dashed by, met her reproving glance unflinchingly, with merely a shade of vexation on his handsome face.

Edith said quickly "I wonder who that lady is?"

Mrs. Wallace replied dryly "I am not acquainted with her!" Here the subject dropped.

That night Edith asked him who the lady was, and he explained by saying it was a lady customer of his who he chanced to meet, and she invited him to ride.

Edith did not question further, nor did she for one moment believe this plausible story.

Not long after this, Philip Burton came dashing into their room in the mad, furious way he always came, when he had been drinking. His head was badly cut, and from the wound the blood had dripped all over the light overcoat he wore, and with his white, blood-stained face he made a ghastly picture.

With a frightful oath he told Edith that he had been in a fight, and ordered her to help him at once. But Edith was motionless as a statue: again he spoke his commands in the most infamous language. Slowly, but with such stony firmness that even he was half-sobered by it, she answered, "I did not marry a prize-fighter; and when you get hurt in a fight, you may bind up your wounds as best you can, for I never will."

"Come, Edith," he said more gently, "I have not been in a fight ; don't you know how to take a joke ? I fell on the confounded ice out here and nearly split my head open ; now will you help me ? "

Edith did as he requested, but in her heart she believed that his first statement was correct, as indeed it was.

Never since her marriage had she been recognized by Mr. Burton's relatives, and she often wondered at their apparent rudeness towards her. Philip was ever loud in his praises of his sisters. Edith had met them once a few months previous to her marriage, when Mrs. Able, Philip, and herself had taken a short trip to the city of Lawrence, where they lived, and spent the day with them.

They were ladies that any brother might be proud to acknowledge, and Edith had longed for a better acquaintance.

The younger of his sisters was a sweet little creature, very unlike her tall, broad-shouldered brother. Her husband was a distinguished lawyer ; they had no children, but were devotedly attached to each other.

Mrs. Bradford, the elder sister, was the mother of two little girls, Nellie and Jennie by name, who were as fond of their Uncle Philip, as if he had been their own father.

Edith could not understand why they should treat her with such unmerited neglect. Could she have known that, for reasons of his own, Philip Burton had

kept the fact of his marriage a secret, she would have wondered no more.

The small city of W. soon became too tame for Philip Burton, so he decided to go to New York, while Edith made Mrs. Able a little visit, until he should become settled and send for her.

Mrs. Able and grandma were very glad to have her with them once more ; indeed, the old house had been fearfully lonesome since her gay laugh last awoke its echoes.

It was the last visit Edith ever made them, and was in all respects a delightful one to them all.

Mrs. Able was disgusted, when a telegram arrived from Philip, desiring Edith to join him on the ensuing day in New York.

Edith had a distant cousin by the name of Ina Reeves. When Edith was a baby girl, Ina had lived with her mother, and her earliest recollections were blended with memories of this young girl.

Years passed away, and all traces of Ina Reeves had disappeared, until a few months previous to Edith's marriage, when she learned of Ina's marriage, that her name was Thornly, and that she lived in Brooklyn.

Philip had often heard Edith speak of Ina, and her desire to meet her, so when he reached New York he crossed to Brooklyn, and after a little search, found the long-lost Ina. He decided to let the matter remain a secret, and surprise his wife ; and it was indeed a surprise.

Edith made Ina a visit, and then Philip secured a boarding place in New York, and again Edith began

the old weary life of waiting and watching! of hoping and praying!

One day, after they had been living in this way for a month, Philip came home early in the afternoon, and to Edith's inquiry replied, —

“I have lost my situation.”

“How did it happen, Philip?” she asked.

“Well, I was trimming the window as usual, and I happened to fall from the box on which I was standing. The proprietor came along, and said, ‘I don't wish for your services any longer;’ he would not hear to reason, but paid me off at once.”

“What are we to do now, Philip,” said Edith.

“Starve, I guess,” grimly responded Philip.

Edith was almost hysterical, and leaning back in her chair, she laughed as if the prospect of starving to death was one of the most laughable things in the world.

“I tell you, Edith, I wish I had never asked you to come back to me, at the time you left in that mean, cowardly way; what a consummate fool I was! If you ever go again, remember you can stay and welcome.”

It was an almost daily occurrence of late for him to talk in this way, so Edith scarcely noticed the insults he heaped upon her.

Suddenly she interrupted him with, “Philip, I have an idea,” — the energy of her manner surprised him into silence — “if I will go to work and earn money enough to get away from you, will you let me go?”

“Will I let you go? have I not told you I should hail with joy anything which could separate us?”

Edith's face was one glow of delight ; she would free herself from this degrading life ! she would cast off the name of Burton and be simply Edith Lyton once more ! So charmed was she with thoughts of liberty, she did not notice the fiendish expression of Philip Burton's face, as the fact began to dawn upon him that his victim could escape from him. Once Edith would have cried when he tortured her in this way, but he was losing entirely his power to please or vex her : with one mighty effort he roused himself, and called her profanely the vilest name a man can call a woman ; for one moment she stood transfixed ; her face was ashy white, while her eyes were black with concentrated passion. She sprang toward him like an infuriated tigress.

"Philip Burton, you have gone too far," she said in a hoarse murmur. "I will bear no more ; I will rid the world of such a monster."

Hardly had the words escaped her lips, when, quick as lightning, he raised his hand and dealt a blow which felled her to the floor. In another moment he was bending over her still form begging her to speak to him. "Edith I did not mean to do it ; indeed I did not."

Slowly she opened her eyes again, to behold the white and frightened face of her husband bending over her. The last remnant of respect she had ever felt for the man was gone forever. She loathed and despised him ! The matter was decided that Edith was to find employment and earn money enough to leave him. She made him swear, by all that he held most sacred, that he would in no way interfere with her going. The next

difficulty was to obtain work. Edith was far from well; this long continued strain was telling painfully upon her delicate organization. Day after day she sought for work, going from one lofty attic to another, but the desired position was not found, until she had walked her only pair of shoes nearly off her feet.

"What shall I do now," thought Edith, as the sole entirely separated from the upper, and only held by the heel. A shoemaker soon fastened it on with a few pegs, and Edith was once more in a walking condition. She felt so discouraged she was almost ready to lie down and die, when she found a place to make silk fringe. It was a new business to her, and the loudly-whirling machinery made her head ache sadly; but she persevered, and the first day succeeded in making seventy-five cents. On the second day as she was preparing to go to work; the same unfortunate shoe ripped entirely across the foot; here was a dilemma, for as she had no money, she must invent some way to repair the worn shoe; so she seated herself, with a large needle and coarse linen thread, and sewed the rip as neatly as she could. Every day the shoe ripped out afresh, and each day was duly repaired by our unhappy little friend.

Some days she was so sick, that her tired feet almost refused to carry her the long distance she was obliged to go to reach the fringe shop; but she never faltered until she was the possessor of the small sum of six dollars, this she placed in her trunk for safety, and made known her intention of leaving her husband at once. Philip Burton said nothing, but left the house soon after,

and Edith discovered with dismay that the key to her trunk was gone also. All through the long hours of that day she waited impatiently for his return. At last he came, and Oh, so drunk, that it was with difficulty that Edith ascertained that the key to her trunk was in his pocket, and her money had gone to buy the liquor which now stupefied his brain and body. She said nothing but sat down in hopeless agony to consider what to do. The room became unbearable to her, the stillness of which was broken only by the heavy breathing of that thing upon the bed, which bore the image of a man.

Hastily throwing on her hat and shawl, she crept from the room very softly ; on she went rushing along with the busy multitude ; it was the verge of evening, and the big city was all astir with life ; merry children passed her, joyous in their untamed spirits, and the man of business, anxious to rest his tired body by his own loved fireside, jostled her in the crowd : then a wretched beggar held out her shrivelled hand for help. A busy, changing scene surrounded her, turn which way she might.

Not caring where she went, she staggered blindly forward, impelled by the terrible pain at her heart, until she found herself at Grand street ferry ; should she cross it ? She had a few pennies and, they might as well go this way as any ; so, elbowing her way through the crowd, she reached the farther end of the boat, and leaning against the railing, looked longingly and fearfully into the dark, black water. Something whispered in her ear, " Do it ; it will take but a few moments, and

then all will be over. You will never suffer any more. You will never be misjudged again ; every one will speak kindly of you, when you are dead ; even strangers will speak softly when they look upon your calm, still face.

Then turning her eyes from the dreadful water, she raised them to the star-lit sky, and tried to pray. Her mother seemed once more to bend in benediction o'er her head ; and, with this soft and holy influence, the hot tears rained from her stony eyes ; the ice of doubt and desperation melted from her heart, and she was saved.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHADOW.

MRS. WORTHY, the lady of whom Philip Burton hired a furnished room, was worthy by name and by nature ; she was a mother, too, and the glory of motherhood had brought into action all the sweetest, noblest instincts of her gentle nature ; she could never see any little, unprotected thing without longing to shield it.

Edith was sick, very sick, she had returned from that long and troubled walk completely exhausted, and lying down beside that still, slumbering piece of humanity called a man, but bearing little resemblance to one. Edith tried to sleep, but all in vain ; strange visions floated through her head ; she was a little girl once more, and it was her mother's gentle hand that smoothed

the tangled masses of hair from her hot brow ; again, it seemed to be Philip Burton bending over her ; it was his iron fingers clasped upon her throat, and then came blackness ; faintly, but growing clearer and more distinct in her disordered brain, she seemed to see Mrs. Able's face peering curiously at her ; then, rising to a sitting posture, she pointed, with her little burning hand to the apparition, and cursed her for the deep-laid plot which had wrecked her life ; and then, exhausted, she would fall back on her pillow to mutter incoherently.

Thus it was that good Mrs. Worthy found her. Most people would have said, "I am afraid this sick lady has some contagious disease, and whether she has or not, I cannot be bothered with her, especially as her husband is behind with his rent money ; she must go to the hospital, or somewhere out of my way." Not so did gentle Mrs. Worthy say ; she bent over Edith Burton's sick bed almost as tenderly as if she were caring for her own sister, or one of her own little girls.

All through that long and dangerous illness, did this good woman soothe and care for her. Edith grew rapidly worse, her strength was fast failing, and Mrs. Worthy asked her, during one of her lucid intervals, if she had any relatives she would like to send for ; the big tears filled Edith's eyes, as she answered, "No ; not one."

She could not send for Mrs. Able, for that lady had taken an active stand against her since the return of Mr. Able ; she had even gone so far as to write Edith a letter telling her never to visit her house again while

she continued to live with Philip Burton, and had upbraided her in the most cruel manner for her marriage.

There were her uncle and cousins, but she knew that it was a matter of perfect indifference with them whether she lived or died.

Mrs. Worthy said, "How about that distant cousin of yours who lives in Brooklyn, did you not say her name was Thornly?"

"Yes," said Edith, "that is her name, but she is not well, and I dislike to trouble her."

"I don't believe she will consider it any trouble," Mrs. Worthy replied. "I think I had best go over there to-day and tell her."

Edith made Mrs. Worthy promise that she would not alarm her cousin about her, and that lady started soon after, in quest of Mrs. Thornly.

Philip Burton seemed enraged to think Edith should dare to be sick, and acted more like a fiend than ever. At night, he would come noisily home, long past midnight, cursing and raving at sick women in general, and this one in particular; he would proceed to put her medicine far out of her reach, and, blowing out the light, plunge into bed, cursing at every breath; and then followed long hours of agony for Edith, who would beg for one drink of cold water, only to be refused, again and again, in the most brutal manner.

One night the fever was at its height, Edith had moaned and tossed restlessly all night; as soon as Philip Burton came into the room, she begged him in the most pitiful way to give her a drink of water.

"You must think I want to come home as tired as I am to wait on you. I guess you will survive if you do not have any water; you are in better health than I am now," he said.

Edith turned her strangely brilliant eyes full upon him. "Philip Burton, as you hope for heaven hereafter, as you expect to be sick, and suffer, and die yourself, I beg of you, give me just one drink of water."

Philip answered this touching appeal, wrung from the almost dying lips of one he had promised to love and to cherish, with a volley of profanity, and cursing her again and again, he blew out the light and sought his pillow.

All night long, Edith raved with the delirium of fever; she was too crazy now to care that he cursed her; and this bad man shuddered when he heard some of the same terrible language he had used so freely, falling from her lips; he felt a strange creeping sensation of terror stealing over him; her eyes, so bright and unnatural, seemed to gleam out at him, despite the darkness of the room. He dressed himself and stole out of the house unable to endure it longer.

You can creep softly out into the still street, Philip Burton, you can go again to the haunts of vice, but while you raise the intoxicating glass to your lips, her face shall mock you from its depths. You may seek forgetfulness in the society of her of whom the Bible says "her steps take hold on hell," in the midst of all this wanton gayety, you will feel those blazing eyes upon you; you will hear that voice, whose every tone was

— music to you once, — you will hear it now in curses and discordant laughter ; through the long, long years to come, that pitiful cry for just one drink of water shall ring in your ears !”

Two days after Mrs. Worthy went to call on Mrs. Thornly, that lady came to see Edith. As she entered the room, she started back in dismay. Was this shadow of a woman, who a few short months before had been at her house, one and the same person ? She could not believe her eyes. Edith’s long, shining hair was almost the only recognizable thing about her, and this lay in tangled masses around her head ; but for the glassy eyes you would have thought her dead. Her voice was very weak as she said, “ It is very kind in you, Ina, to come to me. I hope the long ride will not make you sick.”

Ina was prepared to find her very sick from what Mrs. Worthy had said ; but the reality was almost more than she could bear. By a powerful effort, she choked back her feelings, and tried to be cheerful. “ Edith,” she said, after a few moments delay, “ would you like to have me comb your hair ? ”

Edith assented, and Ina worked long to untangle the shining mass, which seemed mocking, with its brilliant beauty, the corpse-like face so near it. Ina remembered how she had combed this same silky hair years ago, when its owner was a happy little girl ; her mind carried her back to the time when she, a little orphan girl, with a black dress and very sad heart, had first found a home with her cousin, Ella Lyton. And looking back through

the years which had flown, she felt that to the lovely Christian influence of Mrs. Lyton, she owed much. She seemed again to hear her say, "Ina, when I am gone, you will watch over my little Edith, — promise me."

This conversation occurred some time before Mrs. Lyton went to the West Indies, and Ina was young then, and thought little of the promise she had made. Years had passed, and she was now a mother. She almost upbraided herself that she had allowed so many years to pass without even hearing from Edith; perhaps, she thought, bitterly, "I might have prevented this unsuitable marriage if I had been near her."

Edith said, with slow and painful utterance, stopping often, as her strength failed her. "I have been very sick, Ina, but I am better; I had hoped God would take me, for my life is very bitter; but I feel now I shall get well. Do you see that little picture," she said, pointing with a waxy finger to an old-fashioned looking-glass, with a picture at the top of it. It represented a cool stream of water, on the banks of which grew a weeping willow tree, whose long branches dipped almost into the water, while soft green grass bordered the stream like a velvet carpet.

"Yes," said Ina; "I see it."

"Since I have been so sick all I could think of that seemed to make me happy, was a little green grave right under that big tree, where, through all the long long years to come, I should rest, and hear the cool fresh water as it gurgled down the stream."

Ina's eyes were full of tears ; but Edith did not notice it, as she continued, in a faint voice, "I know I am not prepared to die, but God is merciful, and now I believe I shall get well, and who knows," she said, wearily, "I may not be as near to what I ought to be, in the future, as I am to-day."

"Don't talk so, Edith ; God is very good. He has spared your life for a good purpose. Do not question his goodness."

Edith's recovery was slow, but sure from this time, and Mrs. Worthy soon had the satisfaction of seeing her patient down in her pleasant parlor, where she was carried by the strong arms of Mrs. Worthy's kind brother Henry, who, like herself, was ever ready to give a helping hand to those who needed it.

"I am almost well enough to take my departure," said Edith, a few days after she was first brought down stairs.

"Don't be in a hurry, child," said Mrs. Worthy. "You are still very weak, and a relapse might be the result of too much exertion."

"When I leave your house, Mrs. Worthy, I shall also leave Philip Burton, never to live with him again," said Edith.

"I am glad to hear you say that, Mrs. Burton."

"Don't call me Mrs. Burton again, please ; just call me Edith."

"There is one thing I dislike to tell you, Edith," said Mrs. Worthy ; "but you must know it sooner or later ; and that is, Mr. Burton, during your illness, pawned almost every article of your clothes. It made my blood

boil to see him take one thing after another, and you so sick. I thought myself, at one time, you would never need any of them again."

Edith was silent for a few moments, as, with closed eyes and tightly clasped hands, she tried to shut out Philip Burton and his heartless treatment.

Now that Edith was getting well he stopped his excessive drinking and tried to make her believe he was very penitent for his brutal treatment of her, but it was all in vain ; henceforth there was a great gulf fixed between them, over which Philip Burton might not cross.

The night preceding the day in which Edith left Mrs. Worthy's house, and separated herself from Philip Burton forever, she had a long, earnest talk with Philip, — the first since her illness, — in which she told him that the world was wide, room for him and room for her, and that henceforth their paths divided ; and, with almost saintly forbearance, tried to turn his thoughts to something higher and better than what he had yet experienced. She spoke of reform, and alluded in the most touching manner to his sisters, and begged him, for their sakes to try, and leaving the past behind him, live up to his highest interpretation of right and honor ; she forgave him as she hoped to be forgiven by-and-by herself, and told him that the only reparation she desired was for him to leave her the remnant of her life unmolested.

Philip Burton was almost dazed by all this ; was this the girl he had married ? this woman with her pale face and searching eyes ! — eyes that looked from their pure

depths, deep into his black soul ! Or was that girl-wife, so impulsive and almost childish innocent, dead, and from her ashes lived a woman, who could read him like an open book ? It was only one short year and six months since Edith Lyton changed her simple girlish life for this terrible experience of married life.

Once again she steps forth into the world, almost as much alone as when she entered Mrs. Able's home years before. Ina had invited her to come and make her home with her for a time ; so Edith accepted her kind invitation.

But a few days elapsed after she had been with Mrs. Thornly, when Philip Burton called there, refusing to leave until he should see Edith. Slowly she entered the room where he was waiting to see her. For a few moments they were both silent, when he said, " I have no right to speak of my love for you, Edith, when my actions have belied the words my mouth would utter ; but," he continued, and his voice was husky with the emotion he was trying to choke down, " I cannot exist without you. I know how this must seem to you, when I have again and again forgotten all that I should have remembered, and have treated you shamefully. Yes, Edith, I have been a brute ; do not shrink from me so, it was not I, my precious wife, but the liquor which maddened my brain. Speak to me, Edith ! Is there no hope ? I do not ask you to return to a besotted wretch like me, but I ask that if, in the future, I reform and become such a man as you could love and respect, will you give me just one hope that sometime, perhaps five

years from now, ten years if you wish it, you will once again be my wife."

"No, Philip! no!" she answered. "Make no reformation with the vain hope that you will ever be nearer to me than you are to-day, for this can never be; but if, for the sake of the dear sisters who love you so tenderly, if for the sake of a great common humanity, that must ever feel your influence for good or evil, and better still, if for your own sake you become, as you say you can, a good and noble man, I shall know it, and, viewing your work from afar, shall rejoice in it as no one else can; but I shall never be your wife again. I owe a duty to myself as well as to you, and one duty never conflicts with another. God bless you, Philip! and help you to an earnest, manly life."

"O, Edith! perhaps I am selfish, but I cannot be anything but what I am to-day, unless you help me, — unless you give me the one hope with which I can break these fetters of sin, and come forth a new man; but take that hope from me, and what have I to strive for? Your little slender fingers could break asunder these iron bands which enslave me, and I should once more be a free man."

Philip, you are wrong; once I listened to you, when you placed your whole future destiny in my hands, and told me that your salvation or ruin rested in my power; and I remember how I trembled at the words you uttered, half believing, as you said, that the future destiny of an immortal soul hung on the slender thread of my decision; but it was wrong, — all wrong; from that

day I can mark your downward course. I gave all that I had to give — my life, my happiness — for your salvation. What did I gain? your ruin and almost my own. Your future destiny is in God's hands and yours; thrust not the awful responsibility of your future upon me, for you deceive yourself; it rests with you and not another. When I first met you I was striving for a better life. I lived a life of prayer and faith. What am I to-day? Philip Burton, look at me. I am a wreck in health, and morally speaking have almost lost my faith in God and man; then ask me not to stand in God's stead to you, but rather turn your heart towards him who alone can bring you out of the slough of sin and misery. Think of me as dead; for the simple, trusting girl you married is no more; so you may mourn for her, and may her memory make you a better man, as perhaps, in God's great future, it may yet make me a better woman. Good-by, Philip; again I would assure you that in my heart I forgive you, and so farewell." She held out her hand, and for one moment he clasped it in his own, and then she was gone.

Philip Burton was in no enviable frame of mind; he felt he was baffled effectually, and the thought was torture.

Edith had ever possessed a strange fascination for him, and he was perfectly truthful in saying it was the liquor, not himself, which had actuated his ill-treatment of her. Never had she looked half so lovely to him as she appeared that day. If there had been a powerful charm in the shy, innocent girl, there was a double one in the

clear-sighted woman, who had told him the plain unvarnished truth. He knew it was worse than useless to try to persuade her to live with him again ; so he reluctantly submitted to the inevitable.

Edith gradually struggled back to health once more, and again the necessity of action was forced upon her ; but what should she do ? She was not strong enough to do anything hard, so the matter was a difficult one to settle. Mrs. Thornly thought the best thing Edith could do was to learn dress-making ; so she offered to pay for having her taught a new system which was considered very good. After a while, Edith was ready to begin her new business, and as her friend, Mrs. Wallace, of W., was anxious to do something of this kind, they joined interests, and commenced business.

Edith felt almost frightened when she saw for the first time her name, "Edith Lyton, Fashionable Dress and Cloak Making," printed, in big letters, on the glass door of the rooms they had taken in a public block. Next to them was a doctor's office, and soon after the new dress-makers commenced their business, this good doctor was often disturbed nights by Edith, who had contracted a severe cough, the hollow sound of which reached the ears of Dr. Abbott.

"I'm just a mind to go in there," he thought one day, "and see if I can give that woman something to stop that confounded cough. I would like to know how a man can sleep, with such an incessant barking in his ears." So, suiting the action to the word, he knocked at the door.

Mrs. Wallace opened it, and said, "How do you do, Dr. Abbott, walk in."

"Which of you ladies is it who has such a troublesome cough?" he asked, abruptly.

Mrs. Wallace quickly introduced Edith to Dr. Abbott, and she replied, "It is I, doctor. I am sorry if I have disturbed you."

"I think," he said, without noticing her apology, "that I can give you something to stop your cough, if you will take it."

"Certainly, I will take it, and shall feel very grateful to you for it," she said.

Dr. Abbott rose without a word, and went back into his office; soon he returned with some dark mixture in a glass, and handed it to Edith to drink. "Now," he said, "just step into my office before you retire, and I will give you some more."

Edith did as requested, but it took a great many doses to cure the cough, and necessitated a number of calls on Dr. Abbott; she found him a very interesting conversationalist; sometimes he lent her entertaining books to read, and in many little, unobtrusive ways smoothed her rough path.

Continued sewing soon made inroads on Edith's health, which had never been good since her severe illness. Physical weakness was fast making sewing impossible, for her eyes began to fail her so fast, that sometimes she would sew for hours without seeing a single stitch she was taking; so the necessity for change again occurred. Mrs. Worthy had given her a

most pressing invitation to visit her ; she had moved from New York to Brooklyn, and there was nothing to remind Edith of the old, dreadful life.

After much deliberation, Edith decided to go there for a while, and to ultimately seek different employment. She found Mrs. Worthy the same dear, sweet woman she had learned to love, when every other earthly thing seemed to have failed her ; together they went to the theatre, and visited picture-galleries, but, last of all and better than anything else, Mrs. Worthy got passes, through the influence of one of her friends, to go to Buffalo, and they visited the place of all others Edith had most longed to behold, Niagara Falls. As she viewed that wonderful combination of beauty and grandeur she felt lost in the contemplation of it. How like human life it seemed, as, impelled by a resistless power, the foaming water rushed madly towards the high, rocky wall over which it tumbled, sending showers of spray in all directions, and the beautiful mist rose in snowy showers, until it seemed to kiss the clouds. A short ride brought them to the Whirlpool Rapids, and descending by means of an elevator, they found themselves face to face with the surging, hissing, foaming water. How like a living thing it seemed, as it dashed against the rocks on which it rushed !

Edith said to Mrs. Worthy, "It seems to me my life is like this water. I have plunged over the precipice and now I am in the rapids."

Mrs. Worthy was silent a moment, and then she said, cheerfully, "This water will soon reach the peaceful

bosom of Lake Ontario, Edith ; let us hope your life will be as rich in blessings to yourself and others as that lake is deep and blue."

During Edith's visit at Mrs. Worthy's, she received a letter from her long-silent cousin Victoria, asking her to come and stop with her for a time. She was going to house-keeping, and wished Edith to be with her ; for Colonel Faber was away much of the time, and she disliked being alone. Edith hardly knew what to do. She realized from past experience, that Victoria was not one she would like to live with, but she also knew it was difficult for her to get anything to do that she was capable of doing. So, after a few days of consideration, she decided to accept Victoria's invitation.

CHAPTER X.

EVERY-DAY LIFE.

VICTORIA's home was situated in the lovely old town of D., and a very pleasant home it was. The family consisted of Victoria and her husband, whose business called him from home much of the time, their daughter Minnie, a sunny-haired child seven years old, and Marian Darling, the maid of all work. But we would not have you suppose for one moment, that this same Marian, like most in her position, was a red-faced girl, with the

seldom-omitted Irish brogue, for you could not make a greater mistake. Marian was very pretty to look upon, with her fair complexion, in which the lily and the rose blended harmoniously ; her eyes were not unlike wood-violets, as they looked softly at you from under their silky fringes, and her dark-brown hair was one ripple of graceful waves. Edith and Marian were soon fast friends, and many a rough spot did Marian's gentle fingers smooth for Edith.

Three days had passed since Edith's arrival, and amidst direful confusion, usually attending such great events, Victoria's second baby made its advent into this strange, strange world. The baby was a wee bit of humanity, weighing only six pounds; it had a little head covered with black hair, and sucked one of its small red fists with never-failing satisfaction, while it rolled its eyes unceasingly, sometimes looking toward its little flat nose, until Edith, who was inexperienced in such matters, declared that the baby's eyes were fearfully crossed; but the nurse told her it was only wind in baby's stomach. A few days only elapsed before Edith, and every other member of the family, discovered that little miss baby could cry. You, who have never had experience with babies, would not believe that such a small bundle of wretchedness could make such a fearful noise. After good Mrs. Bullins, the nurse, had stayed the six weeks for which she was engaged, Edith saw with dismay her preparations for departure.

Victoria said, with her usual languor, "I wish Edith would wash and dress the baby once before you go, Mrs.

Bullins, for my health is so delicate it may be impossible for me to have the entire charge of baby."

Mrs. Bullins threw back her head with a significant sniff, which implied great want of faith in Mrs. Faber's weakness, and aside she told Edith, "that unless she wanted to take full charge of that baby, she had better not learn to wash and dress it; for," said the nurse, "Mrs. Faber is too lazy to breathe, and I can see through her without the aid of eye-glasses."

Edith knew that Mrs. Bullins spoke the truth, but she simply replied with a silent look of reproof. So, when Victoria again requested Edith to wash and dress baby, the nurse made no further objection, and Edith proceeded to undertake the difficult task.

What a task it was! Colonel Faber threw down the paper he was vainly trying to read and entered the room, where Edith, with trembling fingers and flushed face, was taking the first lesson in washing an infant terrible as this one proved to be.

Victoria clasped both hands over her ears, as she rocked back and forth, saying, "Poor little thing! Oh mercy! this screeching will kill me."

Colonel Faber's jolly face appearing at this moment, made Edith still more awkward, and the delicate lace was torn from one sleeve, in her attempt to get the little restless hand into it. Such kicking and yelling Colonel Faber had never witnessed, and he vainly tried to keep his face straight, but the whole thing was so ridiculous that he burst into a merry laugh, as he said, "Well, little girl I guess you have mistaken your calling.

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Come, Victoria, do you not see how nervous you make her, going on in that way? If you cannot dress the baby yourself, surely you can keep quiet while she tries to learn to do it."

It was very seldom Colonel Faber addressed his wife with anything like reproof, and this remark, gentle as it was, threw her into strong hysterics. If the baby had made a noise before, surely Victoria almost equalled it now, as, with screams and tears, she threw herself in all kinds of ungraceful positions. Her husband tried to soothe her, but the more gentle he was, the more unreasonable she became, until, with a deeply troubled look, not unmingled with disgust, he left the room, and soon after the house. So Edith was left to soothe the troubled waters as best she could.

Soon after this, Colonel Faber's business called him from home for several weeks, and Mrs. Faber made the discovery that she was too delicately organized to sleep with her own baby; so it was decided that Edith should take the child up-stairs with her. But the next trouble was that this unreasonable little baby preferred to snooze away quietly in the day-time, while she lay much of the night awake, and insisted on being sung to, walked with, trotted, or amused in any way, by which an infant's cry has ever yet been hushed.

After a few weeks of this tiresome existence, Marian and Edith decided to change work to a certain extent; and so while Marian slept with baby once in a while, Edith performed many a household duty for Marian.

Mrs. Faber seemed to prefer the quietness of her own

room, to any companionship; sometimes Edith would call into the sitting-room to have a little chat with Victoria, thinking to make the time pass more cheerfully; but if it chanced to be soon after dinner or any other meal, she would tell Edith, in a few words, and with a significant wave of her hand, that the work of digestion was now in progress, and that any conversation would impede it. So Edith gradually discontinued her visits, unless requested to come to her cousin's room for a little while, during which time Victoria would talk about Edith's unhappy marriage, and say many unfeeling things, or else she would dwell, with never-failing interest, on the last meal she had eaten, and wonder whether that dressing was going to distress her or otherwise, and also give a long list of directions concerning the oatmeal she wished Edith to cook for her.

With Marian, Edith enjoyed herself very much. It was Marian who saved all the apple-parings and made apple jelly with them, because Edith was fond of it; and it was Marian, too, who made Edith's favorite cake and pie; in fact, she was always surprising her with some kind remembrance.

Edith and Marian used to spend most of their time in the dining-room. Edith had selected this room for her sitting-room, because it was near the kitchen, and by being near to Marian, she felt less lonely. At night they used to enjoy long, undisturbed evenings, after Mrs. Faber had retired to her room, and little Minnie was asleep in her own little bed. Marian and Edith sung, read, or sewed, just as they desired, unmolested. Some-

times Marian would say, "Don't you want a cup of tea, and a nice lunch before you retire?" and Edith was almost always ready to accept, as the nights were long and wearisome to her.

During one of Colonel Faber's short stops at home, he said, "It will soon be spring now, Edith, and then it won't be so dreary for you here. I am going to have a lovely flower-garden, and you shall have your own plot of ground, and plant there your favorite flowers, and cultivate it all yourself."

Edith was delighted, and from this time waited impatiently for the long-delayed spring.

At length the last patch of snow melted from the garden, and a few warm days made the grass begin to grow.

It was time to make the garden, and she waited very anxiously for the little spot, which was to be hers, to be designated to her; but not until the beds were all laid out did she hear anything said about it.

Under the kitchen window was a little three-cornered spot of ground. Mrs. Faber called Edith out one day, and said, pointing to this same spot, "Edith, you and Marian can have this piece of land for a garden; you can make such a division of it as you can both agree upon."

"I think we shall not quarrel over it," said Edith, scornfully.

Victoria had tried, ever since Edith came into the family, to put her as much on a level with Marian as possible; once she had remarked to Edith she thought

she was very fortunate in having two such nice American girls to do her work.

Edith said nothing, but she thought of the letter in which Victoria had invited her to her house, to be a companion to her, and also of the long weary days and weeks in which she had taken care of that little crying baby, and besides this had at various times helped Marian with some of the heaviest drudgery of the kitchen, and had received not one penny for her services. It is true Victoria had given her some clothes, but had she not earned all these, and far more?

As summer advanced Victoria's mother came to make them a visit, and soon after Victoria's sister also came; it had been a long time since Edith had seen either her aunt or cousin, and she was much pleased to meet them. Laura had married some years before this; and had one child, a little baby girl.

Soon after Laura's arrival, she took a long walk with Edith, and during their conversation at this time she said, "How in the world did you ever consent to come and make your home with Victoria? I could not live with her myself and I do not see how you can! I have often wondered how her own husband can endure her, she is so trying. He is one of the best men who ever lived, or he would have left her years ago." Laura talked on in this way, until Edith, who had much cause for dissatisfaction, expressed herself more freely than was wise under the circumstances; for Laura lost no time in repeating to Victoria all that Edith had said, omitting, of course, her own share in the conversation.

Victoria called Edith into her room, and they had a long talk in which all that Laura had told her was repeated.

Edith replied to the charges against her bravely, saying all that Laura had accused her of saying was strictly true. "In justice to myself I might repeat much of what Laura has also said; but she is your sister and I shall say nothing."

This most uncomfortable visit came finally to a close, and Aunt Laura and her hopeful daughter took their departure.

But two days elapsed when the baby was taken sick, and after a few days the disease assumed a very serious form. Edith never knew how dear the child was to her until the little thing lay like a withered flower in her arms; hot tears fell on the small unconscious face, as very gently she carried the little sufferer. Victoria was too delicate to have the care of her sick child; so day after day, night after night, Edith hung over her little charge. Colonel Faber came home and together they shared the care of baby. One night, the strong man's hope forsook him, and bowing his head into his hands he groaned out in his distress, "O, Edith, this is very hard; this little child has woven herself into my heart, and now to lose her is dreadful."

Edith said gently, "Don't give up yet, Colonel Faber: while there is life there is hope. I shall save my mourning until hope is over; while there yet remains one thing to do for baby I must work."

Colonel Faber quickly raised his bowed head, and reached out both hands to take the child, as he said,

"Then let me work also, Edith, for it will help me to be brave."

Victoria asked Edith's advice the next day as to which of baby's dresses would be most desirable to lay her out in.

This was more than poor, worn-out Edith could bear, and bursting into a flood of tears, she said, "Victoria, please don't, there is time enough to talk of that after she is dead. You unfit me for the care of her."

Victoria replied, "I feel that you will yet live to see her suffer, until you will be glad when it is all over, and my making suitable arrangements for her death can do no harm;" but, contrary to Victoria's prediction, the crisis was passed, and baby was in a fair way to recover.

When baby was but two weeks old, she had been named "Edith Lillian." Edith after Edith Lyton, and Lillian after Colonel Faber's sister. Edith had given the baby a beautiful dress, which had been brought to her many years ago by her father, from India, for her name. After a while Victoria decided to change the baby's name; so she dropped the name of Edith, and called her "Lillian Linden," after a friend of hers of whom she was very fond.

Edith had desired to leave Colonel Faber's house immediately after Laura's treachery, and would have done so, but for baby's severe illness; now there was no reason for farther delay, and she prepared to take her departure.

It was early winter when she left Victoria's house:

for nearly one year she had been a member of this family, — had shared, in a certain way, its joys and sorrows.

Victoria bade her an indifferent good-by, but little Minnie kissed her again and again, and clung closely to her when they parted ; baby prattled and cooed unconsciously, when Edith held her tightly in her arms for the last time ; Marian could not keep back the tears, and pressed Edith's hand in silence.

Colonel Faber accompanied her to the cars, and as he took her hand in parting, he said, earnestly, " Now, if you ever want a friend, you have a claim on me ; never, while I live, Edith, shall I forget your care of my little sick baby," and this good man's eyes were misty, as he parted from her.

Edith found Ina far from well, but very glad to see her. The rest attending new scenes and faces was most refreshing to Edith, who was worn out with the experience of the past year.

Two months quickly passed, during which time Edith visited Mrs. Worthy. One day, she had been out for a long ride on the horse-cars, where she had gone to transact some business for Ina ; as she entered the room Ina said, " There is a letter for you on the table."

Edith quickly threw off her hat and cloak, and seated herself to read her letter. What was her surprise when she discovered that the missive was from the wife of one member of the firm of Carter & Co., of S., offering Edith her old place to work, as one of the girls had

left the place vacant by getting married. What old, sad memories this letter brought up!

This girl, who had now left the candy-shop, had been Edith's constant companion for two years, where they had worked in a room by themselves, covering cream-drops with chocolate, and she remembered well how sad they had felt the last day of their work together. Now to think of going back to the same city, and worse still, to the same old room, whose every memory should bring to mind fierce struggles she would fain forget.

There was one favorable thing in the fact that Mrs. Able had removed with her family, to another place, so that the trial of meeting her, or of hearing her unkind remarks, would be averted.

After she had retired that night she thought, and thought, until she was almost distracted, trying to determine what to do; but as this one way was open before her, and all other paths seemed closed, there was no alternative; so four days from the time she received this letter, she found herself once more bound for S.

The kind lady, who had taken so much pains to secure this place for her, invited her to stop at her house until she could obtain a suitable boarding-place.

The rain fell in torrents, as the cars slowly entered the station, and taking a carriage, she was quickly driven to the hospitable home of Mrs. Packard. This kind lady did not wait to let her servant answer the bell, but quickly opened the door herself, and gave Edith as warm a welcome as any one could desire. The pleasant sitting-room, with its rich furniture and

bright lights, made a delightful contrast to the storm outside. Mrs. Packard tried, by every instinct of which her gentle nature was possessed, to make Edith forget all that could trouble her.

The next day the search for a boarding-place commenced in good earnest, but it was not as easy a matter as an inexperienced person might suppose. Almost every one who took boarders preferred gentlemen, and could they be prevailed upon to take a lady, they wanted such a high price for board, that a working-girl could never pay it.

Mrs. Packard said, "Do not be in such a hurry to get a boarding-place; just stay with me for the present, and we shall soon hear of one."

The first day that Edith went back to work in the old candy shop was an extremely trying one to her. As she entered the store in the morning, one of the girls, who had worked with Edith before, came forward and gave her a warm welcome, and soon she found herself in the same old room where she had spent some of the most eventful years of her life. A young girl, some sixteen years of age, was to be her future shop-mate, and so she commenced once more to walk in the old steps of long ago. Belle Granger, her companion in the chocolate room, was a very delicate girl, the only support of a widowed mother, who had suffered through long years with rheumatism, until scarcely a bone in her body was in its right place. But for her crippled mother, Belle was as much alone in the world as Edith, and although

they were totally unlike in almost everything, this similarity in their loneliness made them fast friends.

After weeks of looking and inquiring Edith found a boarding-place. Mrs. Stacy, the woman who was to give Edith food and shelter for a specified sum, was, as people go, a good woman ; but her goodness was more of a necessity than an active principle. She always seemed to be apologizing to the world for being in it. If there was one thing above another she especially stood in fear of it was her husband ; she would start, when he appeared, all in a tremor of excitement to do his bidding. Charles Stacy was contrary, in every particular, to his most excellent wife ; he felt that he had a perfect right to be in the world, and never thought of apologizing to God or man for anything that he might think proper to do. Carrie Stacy's chief attraction to her husband had been her yielding nature, and in this he showed praiseworthy foresight, for he knew that if anything opposed his will strongly there would be trouble.

Mrs. Stacy would say to Edith, in that trembling uncertain way of hers, "Miss Lyton I have to cook to-day ; what would you cook ?" and thus in the most trifling matters did Mrs. Stacy appeal to those around her.

Soon after Edith became a member of the family, Mr. Stacy's father sent them a box containing several articles, but pork, both salt and fresh, was the principal gift, judging from the amount set before them for the following six weeks ; and this, with an occasional dish

of tripe, formed their principal living. Mrs. Stacy would say, "I like beefsteak myself, but he says it tastes too strong of greenbacks," — she always spoke of her husband as "he," no matter to whom she was talking. Often coffee would be the principal thing on the breakfast-table, and Edith would hear with dismay the oft-repeated excuse, "I do not know as you can drink your coffee without milk, but I have none," when, in fact, Mrs. Stacy knew full well Edith had often been obliged to drink it that way or leave it, which she sometimes did.

Edith bore the disagreeable things connected with her boarding-place until want of proper food, together with hard physical exertion, made her sick, and she was obliged to look for a more suitable place in which to exist. During her searches, some people would tell her it was much more profitable to board a man than a woman, and others would declare on no account would they have a woman boarder in the house; but after much looking, and a great deal of inquiry, Edith was at last provided for.

Her new home was with a pleasant old couple, Mr. and Mrs. Warren by name; they had but one child at home with them, a little fellow some fourteen years old. Willie Warren was the child of their old age, and a great blessing he proved to them. Edith found a home for the first time in years, and Mrs. Warren soon learned to give her almost a daughter's place in her heart. This lady was a very lovely woman, her heart was ever filled with sympathy for all earth's sorrowing ones; her own

life had been very full of trouble, and this experience, instead of contracting her nature, as is the case with many others, had ennobled and expanded her, until she was almost oblivious of self, and lived nearly altogether in the joys and sorrows of others.

Mr. Warren was a good man, and a Christian, but he was naturally possessed of an exceedingly vacillating mind; and it was very difficult for him to follow as closely in the step of the meek and lowly Saviour as his heart desired. He ardently longed to be a shining light in the world, and was inclined to forget the words of the Saviour, when he said, "And whosoever will be the chief, shall be servant of all." Kendall Warren was ever first and foremost in the evening meetings with prayer and exhortation, and in order that he might the more acceptably fulfil his duty in this respect, he would labor long and earnestly, — for he was not a ready writer, — to compose and write his prayers and speeches.

Mrs. Warren's sitting-room, was a delightful spot to Edith; first, and better than all the rest, was the sunny face of its mistress, who was ever ready to welcome her home with a pleasant smile and kind word. Lovely house-plants always adorned the windows in the winter-season, while just outside the door, was a beautiful flower-garden in the summer-time. In one corner of the room, was an old black chair, a miracle of convenience to our good old friend Mr. Warren; on one of its ancient arms was attached a table, where most of his prayers and speeches were written, and the room would have seemed strangely empty without the old black chair

and its silver-haired occupant. He would linger, with never-failing delight, on the theme of heaven.

"Why, my Christian friends," he would say, "when we reach that blessed home, which Jesus has gone to prepare, we shall be free forever from sickness, pain, or death, and Christ shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; then we shall hear the triumphant songs of the redeemed, echoing and re-echoing through the endless ages of eternity, and together with cherubim and seraphim, we shall shout victory, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

It was scarcely strange, that, with a thoroughly diseased body that was seldom free from pain, and the heavy burdens of earthly trouble weighing down upon him, this good man turned his mind towards heaven.

CHAPTER XI.

HELEN HAMMOND.

EDITH's life was now a very quiet one, and her whole nature revolted against the irksome monotony of her humdrum existence. What she had said to Philip Burton, during her conversation with him, concerning the ship-wreck of her faith, was literally true; and although few people could detect any difference in her outward life, there was a vast change in her experience; she dis

connected herself from the church, and lived, spiritually speaking, a life of darkness. She was like a mariner without chart or compass, drifting at the mercy of the wind and waves.

The old chocolate-room, in which most of her life was buried, was a dingy place, decorated only by the numerous spiders' webs, which hung in many a dusty festoon here and there, while two windows, looking out on a brick wall not far distant, admitted all the light and air this dark old place possessed. Edith was very rapid in her movements; thus it soon came to pass, that her nimble fingers could accomplish more than any one else had ever before done in the task and toil of her vocation.

During the first part of the time that Edith worked with Belle Granger there was nothing in common between them; so, after the few common-place topics were exhausted they would subside into silence, and for hours nothing but the click, click of their forks could be heard, as they picked the drops from off the grate, and the occasional swashing of the chocolate as it was thrown over the snowy drops. Sometimes, in fact quite often, Belle was in trouble, and then she would unburden her poor heart to Edith, who was always ready with her sympathy, and, if possible, more substantial help. Belle would say "Oh! Edith, if I am ever free from that old church I shall thank God; but to be twitted of my dependence every day of my life, to be afraid to be seen in a decent dress, for fear some member will see me and report far and wide stories of my unpardonable ex-

travagance, is more than I can bear. To have these same people come to my home, and look into closets and under beds, and in every nook and corner, to detect, if possible, some unnecessary article, is too much." As the memory of these distressing things surged upon her, Belle would bow her head upon the work-board in front of her, and cry as if her heart would break. Edith's own eyes were misty, as she answered, "Come, little girl, do not take it so to heart. I know it is dreadfully hard to be placed as you are, but something tells me you and I shall yet live to laugh over our present misfortunes, when you are the rich Mrs. Somebody, and I, by some miracle not yet apparent, shall be rich and influential; we will show some of these good church people how to give, — won't we?"

Belle would laugh through her tears, and declare if such a time ever came, she would pay back every cent and dollar that church had ever given her mother.

Edith was much aggravated by the oft-repeated remark that she had no right to use her own name, so, as time advanced and her wages increased, she soon had the satisfaction of earning large pay; for business was good and her nimble fingers flew more and more rapidly, she decided to get a divorce, not because she wished to launch on matrimonial seas, but to again have the lawful right to her own name; so she called on a lawyer, and being invited into his private office, made known her business. Six years had elapsed since her separation from Phillip Burton, during which time she

had neither seen nor heard from him. Nearly every one has some person who is willing to transact, in a measure at least, some of the business attending a divorce suit; not so had Edith, and the pompous lawyer, with whom she intrusted the case, treated her with the indifference and rudeness he thought a shop-girl merited. Edith had never been in a court house before, and the scene was a strange one to her. Alone she had transacted all the trying business connected with her case, and alone she entered the room where it was to be decided; she had not long to wait, however, for hers was among the first tried, and with loudly-beating heart and trembling limbs she took the oath and answered the few questions put to her by the judge, and was soon free once more!

"Congratulate me, Mrs. Warren," she said, a half hour later, as she entered the room where Mrs. Warren was laying the cloth for dinner, "I am Edith Lyton once more."

"I hope you will never be any one [^] but Edith Lyton, unless you should marry the best man that ever lived," replied Mrs. Warren.

A young lady, by the name of Helen Hammond, had entered the employ of Carter & Co., just before Edith had left to be married: their acquaintance was a short but extremely pleasant one; when she returned she was saddened to hear of Helen's severe illness; she had contracted an obstinate cough, and not giving it proper attention it had fastened itself upon her, and she was then supposed to be dying with consumption.

Poor Helen ! her life had been a dreadful one ; when a mere baby her mother died, and she had not even one sweet memory with which to gladden the dark hours of her unhappy childhood, and still more unhappy girlhood. Helen's step mother was a most unlovable woman ; she had married Ira Hammond because he had money, and at that time, and ever afterwards, looked upon Helen as a most unfortunate encumbrance ; this feeling grew as the child grew, until Mrs. Hammond had learned to feel and to act as if Helen had no right in her father's house. Thus it was that she, so far as possible, thwarted every cherished plan of this young girl's life. When she found that Helen was a fine scholar, and gave promise of graduating with high honors, she immediately took her from school, and placed her in the employ of Carter & Co., and thus Edith first found her, and learned to love her. Helen had an aunt—her mother's own sister—and while on a visit there had been taken sick ; long weeks of dreadful suffering followed, and her case was considered so hopeless that those who inquired for her, asked, with bated breath, if she still lived. What was the surprise of all who knew her, when she was reported better, and still more, when she again returned to S., and after a few weeks came to her old place in the candy-shop. Edith looked upon her as one restored from the grave, and tried in every way to smooth Helen's rough pathway. Their experiences had been different in life, but they had both been very bitter, and it may have been this fact which cemented their friendship. Edith had

hoped against hope that Helen's recovery would prove permanent, but alas ! as the fall advanced, and gradually the leaves begun to fall, Helen's cough grew worse and worse, until her poor, trembling feet could hardly bear her to and from her work. Edith's heart was full of trouble for her friend ; how she longed for money with which to send her South, or at least to try some of the many remedies for this disease. Mrs. Simons was a friend of Helen's, and at her pleasant home this poor, sick girl passed many happy hours. It was during one of Helen's little visits there, that Edith was first introduced to Mrs. Simons, and it proved a very pleasant acquaintance to her. The long-dreaded time when Helen should be unable to leave the house came too quickly, and the question arose between her three fast friends, Mrs. Simons, Mrs. Lilly, and Edith, what shall we do about going to see her ? Edith was first to speak. " I shall brave everything for Helen's sake, and go, for it will be nothing for us to be ill-treated by Mrs. Hammond compared with Helen's suffering all alone." Mrs. Hammond had for years been in the habit of treating Helen's friends, who chanced to call there, with the utmost rudeness ; so it was hardly strange that these kind friends were appalled at the thought of a frequent encounter with this virago ! Edith understood human nature well, and although she trembled slightly when she rung the door bell of the Hammond mansion, she was fully determined to gain admittance. Some time elapsed before the door was opened, and then only enough to dimly disclose Mrs. Hammond ; she was a

tall angular woman, with sallow skin and wild-looking black eyes. Edith said pleasantly, "Is this Mrs. Hammond?" With a sudden jerk of the head she answered in the affirmative.

"I called to inquire after Helen," said Edith.

"She would be well enough if she was not tired to death with company," was the unpromising answer.

While Edith was thinking what to say next, Mrs. Hammond continued, "Her uncle has just left here, and has talked her almost to death."

"I am very sorry for you, Mrs. Hammond; you must feel very anxious about Helen; and I hear that your son is ill, also, I hope not seriously so."

This unexpected sympathy had the desired effect on this strange woman; her face relaxed from its frozen expression, as she said, "My son is better, thank you. I would ask you in to see Helen, but she is so tired to-day, — can you not come to-morrow?"

Edith assented, and took her departure.

After this Edith went to see Helen two or three times a week during the remainder of her short life. Good Mrs. Simons, and Mrs. Lilly, too, were constant visitors in the sick room; beautiful flowers stood on Helen's stand, brought there by loving hands, and seemed in their fading loveliness not unlike the one for whom they were gathered. Helen named her three friends, "Faith, Hope, and Charity." Sweet Mrs. Lilly, with her firm, unshaken faith in God, represented Faith to Helen, while Edith, — who was ever painting, with her vivid imagination, beautiful pictures

in which hope seemed to pierce the clouds around them, and made Helen forget many a pain and ache,— was Hope. Good Mrs. Simons, with her large heart and quick sympathies, was Helen's Charity; and so they reigned in Helen's life—three graces.

The dreary fall soon lengthened into winter, and the pale face on the pillow grew thinner and whiter, save for the hectic flush which rivalled the rose in its deep tint. Spring came, and still the slender thread of life spun out. The early arbutus was gathered by loving hands, to shed its gentle fragrance in the sick room. The first rich, red strawberries, brought from a warmer clime, were carried to tempt, with their luscious ripeness, the dying girl.

If Edith had hoped against hope for Helen's recovery, during the first of her illness, she longed now, as only those can, who have watched the gradual wasting away of one they dearly love, and felt the hopelessness of loving, when, through its power, you can bring no relief to the dear one. Yes, Edith longed to see her much-loved friend at rest, even if that rest came only in the grave.

Edith shed no tears, when, at last, the almost welcome tidings of Helen's death reached her. Again she stood in the little chamber where the last eight or nine months of that dear life were passed, and as she gazed in rapt solemnity upon the face so dear to her in life, she felt a certain feeling of triumph in the thought that Helen could never be sick again,— could never be reached by unkind words or actions, and, better still, would never have to die again! The golden-brown hair rippled back from

the icy brow, and a bunch of the bright, sweet, flowers she had loved so well, nestled in the shining braids, Precious Helen! Your life was short and bitter, but not a failure! and we, who still continue to travel this world of sorrow, shall thank God for the blessed lessons of patience, love, and duty, that we learned in your sick-room!

Like a broken lily Helen looked, as, with a robe as spotless as her life had been, she slumbered peacefully in her coffin. Rare flowers, fit emblems, in their short-lived beauty, of the fair young life so early quenched, were scattered around her. Sleep on, sweet friend! the lovely flowers we have thickly strewn upon thy early grave shall wither, but not so the sweet fragrance of thy life. In many a dark hour, thy memory shall gladden us, and heaven will be a brighter thought to us, because we hope to meet thee there.

Edith's friends were more anxious about her than she could be made to feel about herself. The long-continued strain of Helen's illness had worn deeply upon Edith's health, and those who loved her, heard with dismay the hard, dry cough, and other symptoms of failing health. Still Edith laughed at their fears, and was as careless of herself as ever. Not until the troublesome cough kept her awake, and her strength failed her so rapidly she could scarcely perform her usual work, did she consent to take medicine. For two years her health remained in a very precarious condition, but at length she grew gradually better. The work in the old chocolate-room now, was often dull, and Belle and Edith were

frequently obliged to stay at home with nothing to do, and many a week earned only enough to pay expenses. When, however, they would make large wages, as was sometimes the case when all the teams came in near together, they were almost afraid to go to the counting-room to take their money, they received such sour looks from the firm, and feared a cut-down in the price of their work.

Belle said to Edith one day, "I hope the time will come when we will not have to go sneaking into anybody's counting-room, actually afraid to take the money we have honestly earned."

"I agree with you," said Edith, "but until such a time comes I do hope they won't cut us down."

"Yes, so do I; for heaven only knows what we should do, out of work half of the time and working for almost nothing the other half."

They had not long to wait for the dreaded reduction, for it soon came upon them. At first they felt discouraged, but finally concluded to submit to the inevitable.

About this time good Mr. Warren was taken sick; long he struggled with the disease, or complication of diseases, until death released him from his suffering body, and he went to join the angelic host, of whom he never wearied of thinking. But six short months after her husband's death Mrs. Warren was laid to rest beside him, and Edith was again homeless. Various were her experiences in boarding-places; in one she almost starved; in the next place she was informed that they

were "losing money on her all the time," and being unable to pay more, and unwilling to impoverish the people with whom she was stopping, she again made a change ; this time she roomed in one place and boarded in another ; but the distance between the two places was so great she became sick and was obliged again to move.

After several similar experiences, she at length found herself, one day, standing at the front door of the same old house where Mrs. Able had once lived. What conflicting emotions filled her mind, as she once again took a seat in the parlor to await the entrance of its mistress !

Mrs. Able was dead ; she had died without seeing Edith and had left no message for her. Less than a year afterwards, Grandma Rushton, too, had passed away, but not unforgiven ; for she had begged Edith to forgive her, and had acknowledged all her fault, in influencing Edith's marriage ; and, with fast-falling tears, had placed her wrinkled hands on Edith's bowed head, and invoked God's blessing on her. "Never," said she, "since you first left our roof, have I failed to pray, both morning and night, for the little wanderer. Yes, Edith, I have shed bitter tears over your sad life, and would have shed tears of blood as quickly, if I could ; because I was to blame for it all."

Out of Edith's heart all bitterness had melted from that hour, and she forgave her freely. These thoughts, and many others, filled her brain, as she waited for Mrs. Cameron. The door opened, and that lady entered ; she was a silvery-haired woman, with a fair, almost young

face, and portly figure. Edith introduced herself, and quickly made known her desire for a boarding-place.

Mrs. Cameron never said a word about preferring gentlemen to board, but immediately proceeded to say that she had a vacant room which Miss Lyton could have if she wished. The terms were satisfactorily arranged, and Edith once more slept under the same old roof where she had spent her girlhood.

At first, each apartment was peopled with shadowy memories of the ones who once inhabited its well-remembered rooms. Some were dead, others scattered. She had not been in her new home but a short time, when a lady was assigned to be her room-mate. Mrs. Rivers was a woman of gentle manners and winning ways, and two people could hardly have been found who would harmonize so well.

One night, after retiring, Mrs. Rivers said, "sixteen years ago I was married in this very house."

"Why, how strange!" said Edith, "nine years ago, I left this same house, a bride."

It was a singular coincidence, and more singular still, that both marriages had resulted unhappily.

One of Edith's friends said laughingly to her, "it is bad luck to go back to an old house, Edith, so you had better be prepared for the worst."

Edith replied, "I am always prepared for ill luck, but think I have had my share."

Soon a change came; Belle Granger had an opportunity to go to Philadelphia to live, and as she could do much better there, decided to go. Edith went to the

station to see Belle and her mother take their departure, and very sad they each felt, as the last good-bys were said. Belle could not see the fast-receding city, where she had passed nearly all her life, for tears blinded her eyes, and she sunk back into her seat, to indulge in the luxury of a good cry.

Oh, how sad the old chocolate-room looked to Edith, where for five years Belle had been her almost constant companion, and bowing her head on the chocolate board before her, she gave full sway to her sad memories.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT IS PHILIP BURTON TO ME?

EDITH's new home proved a pleasant one to her, but the old chocolate room was inexpressably dreary.

For hours she would sit all alone, so quiet that the little mice, becoming emboldened by the stillness, would run all around, and many times so absorbed was she in her work and busy thoughts, that she heeded not her strange company.

Not long did the mice revel in this dreary place, for a black and white cat belonging to a grocery store near by, forsook his rightful home and took up his abode in the candy-shop. Thomas, for this was the cat's name, preferred the chocolate room to any other; he was a wild old creature, and did not hesitate to bite and

scratch any one who dared to interfere with his catship. So it was that Edith, discovering him for the first time, snugly sleeping in a pan which had been placed to catch the drippings from the steam pipes, and not being aware of his fierce nature, placed her hand caressingly upon his silky head : in an instant he had seized her by one finger, and bit it so savagely that it made the tears start. Just then Mr. Sampson, the overseer of the establishment, came whistling into the room.

" Well, I declare, Edith," he exclaimed, "that is rough treatment though ; Thomas, you ought to be ashamed to bite a lady like that."

But Thomas only clapped his ears back tight to his head, and switched his long black tail furiously, as much as to say touch me again if you dare.

Edith did not dare for a long time to come, but after weeks of kindness and gentle treatment, he became very fond of her, and would sometimes spring into her lap, when she was busy at work, and in many ways would show his affection for her.

After Kitty came, the dark old room was not nearly as dismal. One day she was working as usual, when Mr. Sampson opened the door and said, "There is a gentleman in the store who wishes to see you.

Edith quickly brushed the dust from her dress, and descended to the store. A stranger came forward and bowed to her, saying, "I presume you do not know me, Miss Lyton, I am H. W. Kellogg of L. My wife's brother, Philip Burton, is at our house, and very ill ; in fact, there is no hope of his recovery.

Edith had grown deathly pale, and staggered against the counter for support.

"Shall I get you a glass of water?" said Mr. Kellogg, kindly.

"No, thank you ; I am better now. What were you saying? Please proceed."

I was about to tell you, that during all his illness he has raved about you, until my wife thinking it might soothe his last hours, prevailed upon me to come and ask you if you would be willing to return to L. with me.

"Mr. Kellogg, what is Philip Burton to me, that I should be selected as a suitable person to quiet his last hours," she asked bitterly.

"Very true, Miss Lyton ; he has not the shadow of a claim on you I grant, but if you could know how dark and hopeless is that death-chamber, you would feel it almost a privilege to be able to bring one ray of light into it."

Edith hesitated but a moment longer, and in that moment her better nature conquered.

Looking up through a pair of misty eyes, she said, "I will go Mr. Kellogg."

Edith went at once to the office, and asked for a few days absence, which request was quickly granted. Not wishing to make the matter public, she said simply that she was going out of town for a few days. . . .

It mattered but little to Philip Burton that the bed on which he lay was an exquisite piece of workmanship, or that he was surrounded by all that wealth could pur-

chase or refined taste devise ; soft lace curtains fell in misty folds at the windows, while the rich carpet gave back no foot-fall from its velvet depths ; the beautiful statue of a flower-girl held in her marble basket the loveliest blossoms which the conservatory could give, but Philip Burton saw them not nor inhaled their fragrance, for approaching death had benumbed his senses.

“What did you say” — Edith Lyton here? — come to see me?” said the dying man. “Ha! ha! ha! you need not think I shall believe that, I tell you Edith Lyton is dead — I killed her; and all the fiends of perdition are around me to-day, trying to avenge her death.” Then he lowered his voice and said, in a beseeching tone, “The last thing that she said to me was, Philip, as you expect to be sick and die yourself, I beg of you to give me just one drink of water. I have tried to forget that pitiful cry, but it has rung in my ears ever since ; when I have been in halls of gayety and mirth that cry has sounded above the music, and louder still than all the laughter — ‘just one drink of water!’ And when I have tried to drink myself into forgetfulness her face has beseeched me from the depths of the wine-cup, and those two little hands have stretched up to me from the sparkling liquor, — ‘just one drink of water —’ the same old cry forever. And now the demoniac faces of a hundred devils leer at me, and repeat over and over again and again that cry for water.

Philip Burton had sown to the wind, and he was

reaping, in full measure, the whirlwind. Not even his worst enemy could look upon that wreck of manhood without a feeling of pity.

Edith gently approached his bedside, and stood with a sorrowful face before the man who had once been her husband. He fastened his glassy eyes upon her as he said, imploringly, —

“Do not mock me with a phantom of yourself, or is it really you, Edith Lyton? Have you stepped from heaven’s glory down to this dark world, to soothe in his last agony, a dying wretch?”

“I am simply Edith Lyton,” she said; “not a phantom, but a reality.”

Her voice seemed to quiet his ravings and her cool hand passing gently over his hot brow, soon soothed him to sleep. How would he awaken, sane or raving? was her constantly recurring thought.

She had not long to wait, and Edith felt, with a cold, creeping shudder, that his eyes were resting full upon her, and that the light of reason shone in them.

“Edith,” he said in a broken voice, so different from the ravings of an hour before, “you are almost an angel to come to me. God bless you.” I am failing very fast, give me some brandy; there, I am better now. I am standing on the verge of eternity, and it is all darkness before me; tell me, O tell me, can your faith pierce through the darkness? Can you see one spark of light for me?”

“The Saviour has told us that he can save even to the uttermost, Philip; can’t you believe him?”

"I fear it is too late, Edith ; I can't believe anything ; it is all mystery. Will you pray for me ?"

Edith's face was ashy white, as, with trembling voice, she answered, "I have not prayed for years ; not since I prayed so wildly that God would let me die ; and that was just before we separated, Philip,"

The dying man turned his face away from Edith, and groaned aloud. "I am to blame," he said, "not only for my own wasted life, but for dragging down another soul with me."

"No, Philip, no ; every soul stands or falls for itself, and on myself alone rests the blame. I will pray for you now. I can pray for you as I could not for myself ;" and sinking on to her knees, her sweet voice filled that death-chamber with its earnest supplication.

"We thank thee, our heavenly father, that for our encouragement, we ever heard of a prodigal son, who, wandering far from his home and friends, wasted all his substance in riotous living, and being hungry, tried to satisfy his longing for food, with husks. At length, he wearily retraces his unhappy footsteps ; doubts and fears torment him ; will his father receive him again ?

"We thank thee, that we read that, while he was yet a great way off, the father saw him and flew on the wings of love to meet him, and in that one moment of joy he fell upon his neck and kissed him.

"Blessed Saviour, bend with pitying love over this thy wandering child ; he has lost his way, and when he would gladly seek his father's house, he finds himself in a wilderness of doubt and darkness. Mercifully appear

to him, *just now*. Thou hast said, 'I am the way!' manifest thyself to him at this time. Through long years of sin and wretchedness he has tried to satisfy the cravings of his soul with husks; he feels that the sands of his life are fast being numbered, and that an eternity stretches on beyond; O, grant him thy salvation! open now his eyes of faith that he may pierce these dreadful clouds, and feel the sunshine of thy presence. As he shall feel the cold waves of the river of death sweeping over him, may thy hand sustain him, and lead him on to peace and blessedness. Amen."

As the last word of the prayer died away, Edith's strength forsook her and she fainted; as soon as possible she took her place once more beside the dying man.

"God bless you, Edith," he said, "you have helped me to die. I feel that although my life has been a very wicked one, there is salvation for even me."

"He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Philip," said Edith.

"And were it not for that, there would be no hope for me," he said, sadly.

"Nor for any one," Edith replied.

A few hours after this, Philip Burton's immortal soul took its flight, and all that remained was his wasted body so unlike his former self.

Edith took her departure as soon after Philip's death as possible, and again settled down to the old uneventful life of the chocolate room, with no one but yellow-eyed Thomas for a companion.

The cold winter came, and the snow piled up against

the dirty window-panes made the dark old room, if possible, more dreary; winter melted into spring, and Edith wondered if she should spend all the rest of her life in this same way.

Great events often follow each other in quick succession.

One day Edith was working away as busy as a bee, when Mr. McKinsey—one of the firm—walked into the room, with a pleasant “good-morning, Miss Edith.”

This gentleman was always courteous; if he was about to cut your throat, he would beg your pardon first. After a few moment's delay, he remarked that it was becoming necessary for them, as a firm, to make different arrangements in regard to their chocolate room; in fact, the times were so hard, that they must get it manufactured for little or nothing; and with this in view, they had given the entire job to the Italian,—Joseph Danagree; he was to furnish his own help and give the work, all finished, to them for a very low figure. Shall you consider a week from the present time sufficient time for your notice, Miss Lyton?”

“Yes, certainly,” answered Edith, in a choking voice; and Mr. McKinsey bowed himself out.

If a bombshell had exploded in the middle of the room it could not have surprised Edith more; she had worked for this firm, in all, ten years, had commenced work there when a mere child, and they had known her entire history, and knew full well that there was not one in their employ who was less able to be suddenly thrown out of work; but they were good Christian men, they

thought, striving, undoubtedly, for God's glory and the good of their fellow men, so it was not for us to judge them.

Edith's feelings were deeply wounded that she, of all others, should be the one to be cast out so unfeelingly. What should she do now? Where should she go? These and similar questions filled her brain, until she grew dizzy and could not hold up her head; so, sinking on the dusty floor she pressed her poor agonized head with both hands, and moaned in pain. One of the girls down stairs, hearing of the new arrangement, quickly bounded up to Edith to express her sympathy. What was her surprise to find her moaning and talking almost incoherently, with both hands pressed to her throbbing head.

"What shall I do for you Edith" she exclaimed, and finally, becoming thoroughly frightened, she flew to a doctor's office, in quest of something which would relieve her friend. The doctor sent some medicine and told the young lady to get her home as soon as possible, and that he would call at Edith's boarding-place during the afternoon.

It was hours before poor Edith got relief, and the doctor said she had had a narrow escape from congestion of the brain.

The week allotted to Edith to remain in the employ of Carter & Co. quickly passed. Going to the counting-room she took her money for the last time and also a recommendation, which bore the signature of Carter & Co., and stepped forth once more a wanderer. A few

days before Edith was aware of the great change approaching in the chocolate-room, she had commenced to work a motto for her dear friend, Mrs. Simons. This lady had met with a severe loss in the sudden death of her husband. As soon as possible after his death she had ordered a picture of him to be taken life size, from a smaller one in her possession. The picture was finished now, and Mrs. Simons said to Edith, at the time she first showed the picture to her, "I want an appropriate motto to hang over it; what shall it be?"

Edith thought for a moment, and then she replied, "I have seen one which I think would be beautiful; it represents a ship on the ocean; black threatening clouds are overhead, and a tempestous sea surrounds the vessel, but, breaking through the darkness, the sweet words, "Peace, be still," shine forth in golden letters. And so Edith promised to find this motto, if possible, and work it for her friend.

Never was a motto worked in more of a tempest of soul than this one. Oh! how the bright words, "Peace, be still," seemed to mock the turmoil of her soul.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW FRIENDS.

EDITH was much beloved by many people in S., and as is always the case with a favorite, she was bitterly disliked by others on this account.

Edith's friends were deeply sorry that she had lost her situation, while there was a certain class who had long been jealous of her, and were glad at heart for her misfortune.

Mrs. Wallace, her old friend in W., was still, and had been for some time, quite anxious to have Edith make her a visit ; so about a week after her discharge from Carter & Co., found her at her friend's house, and for a few days after her arrival it seemed as if they could never talk fast enough, there was so much to tell.

The sympathy of her friend and change of scene brought new life to Edith, and in two weeks she returned to S. in much better spirits.

Mrs. Elmo lived on the same street where Edith boarded, and had lived there many years ; they had been girls together, had sympathized in many girlish trials, were married about the same time, and celebrated the anniversary of their birth in the same good old month of January.

Mrs. Elmo loved Edith as a sister, and as soon as she became aware of Edith's leaving Carter & Co., she had said to her, "Don't feel badly about it Edith, it will all be for the best I am sure. You have not made us a visit for years ; now we want you to come and just settle down for awhile and rest."

Mr. Elmo seconded the invitation warmly, and Edith promised to do as they desired, after her return from W. Mrs. Elmo was of a wonderfully unselfish nature ; her heart was so full of sympathy for others, that she seldom had time to consider her own trials ; the years which

had passed since her girlhood had left little trace on her blooming face; the great brown eyes were just as innocently trustful as in the days of long ago, and the delicate bloom had not faded from her cheek; she was just as pretty a picture to-day as she had been when Will Elmo lost his heart.

"Just think, Edith," she exclaimed, a few days after Edith's arrival, "you and I are thirty years old; does it seem possible?"

"I hardly regret it, said Edith, thoughtfully; "and if the future has no more to give than the past, I almost wish that my whole life was over."

"I don't wonder you feel discouraged; but I tell you, Edith, I firmly believe that you will yet be happy before you die."

"Heaven knows I say amen to that," replied Edith, laughingly.

These two friends had a most delightful time in each other's society; they sang together, read aloud to each other, and sat again in the gathering twilight as of old; and built castles in the air,—gilding them with the richest tints Edith's visionary mind could paint—until sometimes good old Grandpa Elmo would come limping out from his own room, and looking at them from the lofty peak of his long life and wide experience, would call them foolish children, and suggest that they would be better employed if they would comb his hair or talk about the last prayer-meeting.

Edith had another very dear friend by the name of Mrs. Pelton. Naturally possessed of an intense love

of the beautiful, she should have been an artist, but fate had dealt very unkindly with her ; losing her parents very young, she had been tossed about the world, but the many hard knocks had failed to crush that wonderful love for beautiful things. It was remarkable to see what exquisitely lovely flowers she made, — from the full-blown rose to the lily of the valley, or delicate spring flowers — out of wax. Her home was far from elegant, but you never missed the want of furniture or money there ; for the artistic touch of her fingers lent beauty and grace wherever they rested. Many hours had Edith and Mrs. Pelton spent together, forming new designs for fancy work or carrying some new plan into execution, and blissfully happy ones had they been to them. Mr. Pelton was a good man and a kind husband, but he valued the dollar in his hand much higher than some fancy chair, embroidered with the choicest flowers, or a lovely bunch of blossoms, from whose waxy petals you could not so much as refresh yourself with one perfume. It was with this one harmonious element, in their otherwise different natures, that Edith and Mrs. Pelton's acquaintance grew and ripened into as warm and true a friendship as ever existed.

Little more than a year previous to this time, a tiny little human flower had come to shed its heavenly fragrance on Mrs. Pelton's life ; and a beautiful baby as ever gladdened a mother's heart, was little Edith Pelton.

A few weeks after baby was born, Mrs. Pelton said to Edith, " I am going to call my baby Edith. I always liked the name, and since I connect it with you, I love it."

This delighted Edith exceedingly, and she immediately bought the little Edith a gold chain for her neck, and watched with never-failing interest the development of this precious baby. While visiting here, Edith received a letter from her friend, Mrs. Wallace, telling her that she had been able, through the influence of friends, to secure her a position to attend a confectionery counter, in a large house in the city of N. "They will pay you," she wrote, "ten dollars per week, and if you are strong enough to endure the long hours, it will be a good place for you."

A few days after the receipt of this letter, she started for her new position. She had never been in N. to stop, and was not acquainted with any one there. The gentleman who had kindly secured this place for her was a comparative stranger; several years before she had been introduced to him and his wife, and as she alighted from the cars and directed her footsteps in search of his store, she felt like a stranger in a strange place. Here it was at last, with his name in glittering letters on the sign, "Alfred Knowlton."

On entering, she inquired for Mr. Knowlton, who quickly came forward, and shook hands with her as cordially as if she was his equal in social standing; then, taking her satchel, he said, "I guess you had better go to the house with me, and stop with Mrs. Knowlton this afternoon, during which time you will rest. This evening I will go with you to Mr. Fairbank's store, and introduce you. I have told him you were experienced, and you must make him understand that you are, for I am

sure you will suit him ; and he, like most every firm, is opposed to employing an inexperienced person."

By this time the hotel was reached, and Edith was soon ushered into Mrs. Knowlton's pleasant parlor, and very cordially welcomed by her. The ladies, being left to themselves, soon decided that it was advisable to find a boarding-place. A directory was consulted, and getting the names and addresses of several people in this business, they proceeded on their tiresome undertaking.

At the first place they called, were no vacant rooms ; the next one had a small one, and upon Edith's inquiry as to price, she was surprised to learn it was eight dollars for what any one would consider very meagre accommodations ; but after calling at several other places, they found eight and ten dollars was the lowest price stated.

"Mrs. Knowlton," said Edith, "are you acquainted with any one who earns her own living, and boards in a boarding-house?"

After a moment's hesitation, Mrs. Knowlton replied, "Yes; I am slightly acquainted with a lady by the name of Barstow, who tends in a store not far from here."

"Let us call on her," said Edith, before we go to another place ; "she may be able to direct us to some more reasonable house."

Mrs. Barstow was of a warm-hearted, genial nature, more fond of doing a kindness for her friends, than of receiving one ; she took the whole situation in at a glance, when Mrs. Knowlton told her of the difficulty they were having. She had been a widow for many years,

dependent on her own exertion for support, with a little girl to provide for beside.

"I am boarding on Meadow street," she said. "I think Mrs. Rutherford has a small room vacant now;" and thanking Mrs. Barstow for her kindness, they started for Meadow street.

The house was, or had been once, a mansion ; it was large and square, with a canopy over the front door, supported by two immense white pillars, on one of which was a doctor's sign, and on the other a notice informing the passers-by that board and lodging could be obtained at this house. Their ring was answered by a very tall, pale-faced woman, who would have been pretty but for a certain dejected, hopeless expression ; her voice partook of the despondency of her face, as she invited them to look at the room ; they entered a broad hall, at the opposite end of which, an open door disclosed a broad veranda, and on beyond, green trees and a wide open space. The broad staircase conducted them to the upper hall, and stretching on to its farthest limits was the room referred to. It was a wee bit of a room, with a small looking-glass upon the wall, hung at so great a height, that none but people of lofty stature could hope to get a glimpse of themselves ; the bed was a very feeble-looking structure, exceedingly narrow and flat ; an old-fashioned bureau and one chair comprised the furniture. There was a row of nails at one end of the room, designed to hang such few articles upon as one might not need upon their back ; this room with board was five dollars per week ; this price delighted

Edith, for it came within the limits of her pocket-book, and quickly engaging board, they took their departure.

The handsome store of Fairbanks was one blaze of light, making the plate glass and silver-mounted show-cases glisten brilliantly, as Mr. Knowlton and Edith entered. It was a bakery, confectionery, and ice-cream saloon; soft lace curtains, draped over rich blue ones, divided the store from the saloon. Mr. Fairbank's desk was just inside of these curtains, and here they stopped. Waiting one moment for him to finish the sentence he was writing, Edith was introduced. Since she had been told she must profess experience, her heart misgave her; so, with trembling frame and fluttering heart, she answered Mr. Fairbank's rapid questions; he was an abrupt man, with a shrewd look in his keen, gray eyes, and an almost hard, unfeeling expression.

"You have had experience in confectionery, Miss Lyton, I believe," he said.

"Yes sir; I have worked for the firm of Carter & Co. for ten years."

"Very good," he replied. "Come into the store with me, and I will show you your department." "I shall expect," he added, "that your thorough knowledge of the business will relieve me of all anxiety connected with this department. You are to ask me no prices, and will order every article for your stock. The last girl we employed was not worth the room she took up, and I am worn out with inefficient help."

Edith was to begin work the following day; so, bidding him good-evening, she sought her boarding-place.

The little room, with its scanty furniture, looked strangely dreary in the dim light of the lamp which had been given Edith ; her trunk had arrived, and as it was a large one, the room was completely filled with it and its owner. It seemed to Edith that a mountain had suddenly fallen upon her since her conversation with Mr. Fairbanks. She was sure she never could meet his requirements, and her heart sunk with the thought of the responsibility. Opening one of the bureau drawers, her eye fell upon a crumpled piece of paper, on which was written, in lead pencil, " Out of all thy troubles I will deliver thee!" She laid the little scrap of paper down, and smiled wearily at its comforting words. She retired to her little bed, but not to sleep ; for though all the long hours of that night she turned and tossed, until morning found her worn out with her night of anxiety ; the bed proved to be a very musical one, and during the restless turning of its little occupant it groaned almost like a living thing. Hastily dressing herself she descended to the breakfast-room, where she received a pleasant smile from Mrs. Barstow, who introduced her to a tall, dark lady, seated by her side, as " my daughter Mrs. Wilton, Miss Lyton."

Mrs. Wilton bent a large pair of velvety-black eyes full upon Edith, as she gracefully acknowledged the introduction.

At the end of the table, and on the other side of Mrs. Barstow, sat a dark-complexioned gentleman, who gave Edith a searching glance, as Mrs. Barstow said, " Mr. Charlton, Miss Lyton."

Next to him was a lady, who might have been young, and, possibly, was old ; her hair was almost white, but was arranged in a fanciful manner, while her entire dress partook of the same showy style.

"I suppose I must do my share towards making you acquainted with this family, Miss Lyton," said Mr. Charlton, as, with a mischievous look in his eyes, he said, "this lady at my left hand is Miss Marvin. Miss Marvin, let me introduce you to Miss Lyton. The gentleman at the foot of the table (and here let me say this end of the table is the head and that the foot) is Mr. Rayners, Miss Lyton."

Mr. Rayners was a pleasant-faced, middle-aged man, with iron-gray hair, and a merry twinkle in his eye. He said, quickly, "I am very happy to make Miss Lyton's acquaintance, and would also beg to tell her, on this occasion, that Mr. Charlton is mistaken in supposing that end of the table to be the head ; I leave it for you to say, Miss Lyton, if you do not think this is much the most dignified looking place."

Edith laughingly replied, "I shall always look upon that place as the head of the table, in spite of first prejudices."

Edith was next introduced to Mrs. Wilton's husband, who was the opposite in every respect to her but in height ; his hair was brown and wavy, and his eyes blue in color, and full of witchery ; a light mustache, harmonizing with his hair, gave to his face a distinguished look.

Edith drank her cup of coffee, and tasted little else ;

she had decided to see Mr. Fairbanks, and tell him the truth in regard to her inexperience; it was true, that she had had a large experience in making candy, but making and selling were very different, and she felt she could not begin work giving her employer a false idea of her ability. The colored waiter was very busy dusting chairs and tables, and putting the saloon in order for another day, when Edith entered the store, and proceeded to the desk.

"Mr. Fairbanks is not here yet, Miss," said the waiter; "he will come very soon."

Edith sank into a chair, and waited for the proprietor of this imposing place; some moments elapsed before he came, and when his quick, restless step at last echoed through the store, Edith's heart bounded as if trying to escape from its narrow prison.

"Good-morning, Miss Lyton," said he, bustling up to his desk; "you are ahead of me this morning."

"Only by a few moments, Mr. Fairbanks. I want to say just a few words to you," she said, in a trembling voice.

The gentleman turned his eyes full upon her, and waited in respectful silence.

"I cannot bear the thought of entering your employ under a false impression, and, after thinking the matter over, I must tell you clearly I am not an experienced saleswoman; it is true I have worked on candy for a number of years, but I have never sold it."

There was something very unusual in the frank way in which Edith Lyton made known her inefficiency to

Mr. Fairbanks. He was a kind-hearted man, and her rigid truthfulness won his respect in a moment.

"Miss Lyton," he said, "I think you will suit me. I admire the frank manner in which you tell me of your inexperience. I am more than willing to give you a trial.

Edith did not expect this; she was prepared for roughness, but not for these few kind, gentle words! She tried hard to choke back the tears, but all in vain; she was almost hysterical through the severe strain of the past few hours, and leaning against the desk with both hands up to her face, to press back the fast-gathering tears, she looked up at her employer through the mist, and said, "I am very much ashamed of myself, but the tears will come. I have not slept all night, and I am tired and nervous."

"I have a wife and sister, Miss Lyton, and understand women well. You are in a strange place, and I was very severe in my remarks last night. I am sorry for it; now go and wash your face and dry your eyes, and I will tell you about the work; and as this is new business to you, I will pay you eight dollars a week for the present."

Edith was satisfied with her pay, and at once acquiesced with Mr. Fairbanks' request. Together they went through the stock, and as he told her the different prices she wrote them down for reference; the gentleman showed her how to make paper horns, and after all this she commenced the daily cleaning. The two sets of brass scales Edith's deft fingers polished until they looked like gold, and many times Mr. Fairbanks would

say, smilingly, as he passed Edith's shining show-cases and brilliant scales, "It does my eyes good to look at your department, Miss Lyton; it is so spotlessly neat."

The first customer Edith waited upon was a young man; he came in with a dash, and asked for a quarter of a pound of peppermints. The candy was quickly weighed out, but not being very expert at making paper horns, her fingers trembled as she folded the paper in the desired shape and quickly seized the scale to pour the candy into it. Alas! the nervous little hands poured the precious peppermints wide of the mark, and only a few fell into the horn, while the rest rolled, with a loud rattling noise, to the floor. Edith felt unutterable things, but she was outwardly calm, while she measured another quarter and this time with success. The hours in the store was very long, beginning at eight in the morning and ending at ten in the evening, and Edith would go home almost staggering with weariness at night.

Mrs. Barstow had a large, pleasant room, the door of which was beside Edith's. "Come right in here every night, Miss Lyton, and rest yourself before you retire. You will always find me here: there! take this big chair, and put your feet on this one. I know they ache, — mine do."

Very often Walter Charlton would form one of their number in the evening, and with his feet on the window-sill and his meerschaum pipe in his mouth, he would declare himself properly fixed, and proceed to amuse Mrs. Barstow and Edith by his comical remarks. Walter, with all his fun and drollery, was far from a happy man;

in the first place, he tried too hard to be happy, and as happiness is a shy goddess he failed to win her. In his heart he thought that fate had been very unkind to him, and because he had experienced some trials in common with other mortals he was morbid, and thought too much of his troubles and too little of his blessings. Three things were necessary to Walter Charlton's existence; firstly, his well beloved meerschaum; next, his ugly horse, which no one but himself could harness; and, thirdly, the admiration of the fair sex, — as he called the ladies. It would have been an utter impossibility for him to have truly loved any woman, because he worshipped himself, and that worshipful love of Walter Charlton left no room for the love of anything better; but he was ignorant of this, and firmly expected to fall in love sometime, when he should have found a paragon of perfection in some woman, and then he would need only to make known his devotion, for her to concentrate all the sweetness of her nature into one grand passion for himself.

This was Edith's new friend!

Mr. and Mrs. Wilton were very pleasant friends, and Edith passed many a happy hour in their society.

Sunday was a day of rest to the Meadow Street boarders, and after breakfast you find them gathered in a merry group on the back piazza. Walter would lie stretched at full length on a long bench, with a slanting board for a pillow, and smoking as usual. Edith often wandered into the old yard, to search for four-leaved clovers, with Mrs. Wilton for a companion.

Edith's work was fast wearing her out, and every day she grew less able to battle with the long, long hours, to say nothing of the almost constant cleaning. One of the gentleman clerks would often bring her lovely flowers, so Edith was adorned with rose-buds and pinks every day. On many accounts her life was a happy one, had it not been for the utter exhaustion attending her work.

Mr. Charlton said to her one day, "Miss Lyton. I wish you would take a sister's privilege with me; you are a stranger, and I am often very lonely; I think we can be a mutual benefit; will you agree to this?"

Edith gave a willing consent, and from that time they enjoyed the most unreserved freedom in their friendship. If she had been his own sister she could not have teased him any more, or showed, in a more ridiculous light, his weak points to him.

Mrs. Barstow would say, "You two are quarrelling again! Edith does not treat you well — does she? What shall we do with her?"

"I have just threatened to throw her out of the window; she cannot even let me exist with the pleasant delusion that I possess a nice moustache, but thinks the stray hairs are likely to get lost from each other; don't you call that insulting, Mrs. Barstow?"

"Yes, certainly, we will have to put a plaster on her little mouth, to insure your future peace of mind, — won't we, Walter?"

Sometimes Walter turned the tables upon Edith, and she would enjoy a joke at her own expense, just as keenly as if Walter was the victim.

Edith began to feel more and more unable to endure the hard work, and found that sickness would inevitably result if she continued longer at Fairbanks'. She told him she must make a change or be sick; he had liked Edith from the moment she had told him of her inexperience, and through the weeks she had been in his employ, his respect had daily increased, until he felt a certain attachment for her.

"I am sorry to hear you say that, Miss Lyton; but really you do look fearfully tired. I wonder if you could not divide your pay with some other girl, and so have some help?"

"I would gladly do so, Mr. Fairbanks, but I cannot live on less. I pay five dollars for my board, and fifty cents for washing and ironing, and it leaves me but two dollars and a half."

"I am very sorry to lose you, but if it must be so, I shall have to make the best of it. At any time, if I can help you to get a more suitable situation, do not hesitate to call on me."

Edith worked out her week's notice, and showed the young lady who was to succeed her, through the stock, and in many ingenious ways made the task of learning names and prices easy to her; then, thanking Mr. Fairbanks for his unvarying kindness, she took her departure from the store where she had spent so many weary hours.

CHAPTER XIV.

VARIOUS

THE next place where Edith applied for a position was in a large corset factory in an adjoining city. She succeeded in getting the place, and went to work at once. The sewing machines were run by steam power, and were arranged in rows several times across the long room. The operators were composed of all classes of girls and women, from the mere child to the gray-haired woman, and represented many nationalities. Edith took the machine designated to her, and was given a piece of cloth with which to learn the motion of it; pressing her foot as she was told, upon the treadle, the machine started off with lightning rapidity, and the needle broke before she could think to lift her foot; this was the beginning. Edith remained here a week, and succeeded in earning two dollars and twenty-five cents. She would still have continued this weary struggle for existence, hoping by continued practice to be able to earn more, but her eyes completely failed her, making farther stitching impossible. She received a letter from a friend in S., saying she could have a place to learn to make paper boxes, and she immediately returned there, and entered upon this new business.

The smell of the paste was sickening, and she found that earning but forty cents for one hundred boxes, would not begin to pay her board; and, what was still more dis-

couraging, girls who had worked at the business five and six years were unable to earn five dollars per week. She received a letter from Mrs. Barstow about this time, informing her of a place in a large rubber shoe manufactory. "You can earn enough to pay your board," she wrote, "and be looking all the time for some place more desirable."

"Mrs. Elmo advised her not to go, saying, "A rubber shop is no place for you, Edith."

"I will open the Bible," said Edith, "and see what verse my eye falls on."

Quick as thought, the book was opened, and she read, "Get ye up from here, go without delay."

The two friends laughed quite heartily over this strange answer, and Edith prepared to go.

She found the rubber-shop a dismal old building, made of red brick, and had been used so long for the manufacture of boots and shoes that every board in the partition and floors was saturated with this unwholesome odor.

Mr. Finly, the overseer of the department in which Edith was placed, was a smooth-faced man, with a soft, cat-like tread, and his voice sounded not unlike the satisfied purring of one of these quadrupeds. The room was as dingy and unwholesome as the outside of the building indicated. She was given a stool to sit on, and a pair of shears almost as big as herself. A pan made of tin, and filled with a vile-smelling liquid, called cement, completed her outfit. Her first work was to

line with red flannel a set of men's soles, number fourteen.

Before beginning work, the girls and women employed in lining insoles, were obliged to take an immense basket and, in an adjoining room, cut their lining in the rough, from a big pile of flannel left after cutting out the boot legs. Two persons went together, and Edith's companion was an old lady by the name of Rusk; they were neither of them strong, and the heavy flannel, with a dozen thicknesses of it together, was about all they could cut.

Edith said, "Give me the knife and I will cut while you hold it up."

It was a huge butcher-knife, and her strength soon flagged. As she was slashing to the right and left, trying to hack it off, she exclaimed, "What shall I give you, Mrs. Rusk, a roast or a steak?"

The old lady laughed and they each took a seat on the pile of red rags, to gather strength for a moment.

At last the immense basket was full, and they looked not unlike two rats trying to move an egg. One of the workmen, a true gentleman, came to their assistance, and with his help the heavy basket and its contents reached its destination. For seven long weeks Edith remained here, not paying her expenses, but hoping to get some more profitable place. The large shears were entirely too heavy for her delicate hand, and the result was, she made it almost useless. For months after she left this fearful place, the poor over-strained hand pained her almost constantly, and the fingers cramped,

until the other hand was necessary to pull them straight. Edith's natural hopefulness seemed to be forsaking her. Continued misfortune, and such a long, unsettled condition, had brought a deep gloom over her. If she had ever had a little fun at Walter Charlton's expense, during their first acquaintance, he had now turned the tables completely. Edith was too refined to joke about a really delicate matter, but not so with Walter, and finding that Edith was peculiarly sensitive about the rubber shop, he lost no opportunity to vex her. The work was quite uncertain, and she often had a day at home; and on one of these days she received a letter from a distant relative, residing in her native village.

"Mrs. Hedge wrote, "You will doubtless be surprised when I tell you, that some two months since, a gentleman of my acquaintance went to the West Indies. I learned that he was intending to visit the island where your father and mother died, and asked him to make inquiries concerning your father's widow and your half-brother. I received a letter from him a few days since, telling me he had made searches which had led to his finding Mrs. Lyton and her son. I also received a letter directed in my care, and addressed to you, which I enclose to you, thinking it must be from your father's wife.

Edith broke open the strange letter with almost the reverence one feels when looking into a coffin, for after all these years of silence, it seemed like hearing from the dead. The opening words thrilled her heart with a new strange feeling, as she read, —

"MY DEAREST DAUGHTER — Can it be that, after so many years, I am again permitted to hear from you? When this gentleman came with news from you, or from your friend, I felt the long years, which have intervened between my husband's death, passing into oblivion; and again I seem to be standing beside his dying bed, when he commended you to my keeping. How different has my lot been to my heart! how gladly would I have shielded you, Edith, from every care and trouble, had it been in my power! Some three months after your father's death, my youngest boy was born; he is now sixteen years old; his name is Eugene, and I am sure you would love your unknown brother if you could see him; he is at present, employed in a large mercantile house here. I spoke of Eugene first because you were not aware of his existence. Your brother Harry is now in Holland, where he is being educated for the priesthood; in a little more than three years he will enter upon the solemn duties of his calling, and may God grant him success! Write to me as soon as you can, for I shall await, with unceasing anxiety, your letter. Eugene joins me in sending much love.

"Believe me always,

"Your most affectionate mother."

Edith sat for a long time unconscious of the passing time, unmindful of anything but the blessed fact that she was not all alone! The letter was quickly answered, and then followed a delightful correspondence with her two brothers, Harry and Eugene, and an occasional

letter from the mother, and a new era thus commenced in Edith's life.

The rubber shop was neither profitable or pleasant, so one day Edith threw down the heavy shears with a crash, as she bowed her head on her hands.

"What's the matter, Miss Lyton," said kind Mrs. Rusk.

"I am tired of lining soles," said Edith, "and I don't believe I will ever do another one;" so, suiting the action to the word, she gave her notice, and on the Saturday following took her meagre pay and departed.

About the time Edith left the rubber shop, the sad news of sweet little Edith Pelton's death reached her; and, sitting alone, she shed blinding tears, not for little angel Edie, but for the heart-broken father and mother. Tired and worn out with these and other sad thoughts, she fell asleep, and little Edie, with her spiritual face and dark-brown eyes, seemed looking at her. The child's face shone out from a gilt-edged cloud, and with one tiny finger she pointed upward. Edith awoke with a start as Mrs. Barstow and Walter Charlton entered the room.

"What is the matter, little one?" said Walter.

"I have just received news of the death of my friend, Mrs. Pelton's little girl."

"And you are crying over that, are you? You had better save your tears."

Walter was in a savage mood, to-night; so, after a few unfeeling remarks, he bade them good-night and retired to his own room.

After a few weeks of trying in vain to obtain employment in N. she returned to S., and as Mrs. Pelton was very lonely, she decided to remain with her for the winter.

The winter was a dreary one to Mr. and Mrs. Pelton and Edith ; during this time Edith took in sewing when she could get any to do, and thus eked out an unenviable existence.

Mrs. Worthy sent Edith a kind invitation to come to Brooklyn and stop with her for a while and try to get employment there ; so in the early spring she again took up her weary search for work. Every morning she bought a "New York Herald," and eagerly perused its long list of advertisements, but on answering the most desirable of them they proved to be almost invariably for canvassers. Growing desperate, Edith decided to undertake the sale of a book ; the advertisement claimed that one could make five dollars per day easily by selling this new and desirable work. The agent was a one-eyed man, with a greasy face and slovenly appearance ; he was determined that Edith should take this book to canvass with, and after some hesitation on her part, and much loud talk on his, the difficult task was undertaken. When Edith found herself out on the busy street, with the book in her hand, and thought of her strange mission, her heart misgave her. Not until she had walked a long way, and through a number of streets, did she gain courage to ascend the stairs of a modest looking house, and after ringing the bell she awaited, with trembling frame and beating heart the opening of the door.

Trying to control her quivering voice she said to the lady who answered her ring,

"I have a work called 'Palace and Hovel' which I am introducing to the public."

Edith's well-prepared speech was here interrupted by the lady, saying, "I have no time to bother with you ; I don't want the book, and my meat will burn up ;" so slam bang went the door, and Edith looked and felt like a sneak-thief as she descended to the street. On, on she went, not daring to face another woman and ask her to look at this wretched book.

"This will never do," she said, "I must be brave ;" and she dashed up to the next door, much as one would who was going to have a tooth extracted, and feared that delay would lessen their courage. This time the door was opened by a servant, and Edith had visions of an old woman, who used to come around when she lived in S. and ask for the lady of the house. Her business was selling starch polish and telling fortunes ; and when Edith compared herself to this ancient crone, the picture was so perfectly ridiculous, that it was with great difficulty she straightened her face sufficiently to say "Is the lady of the house in ?"

She was shown into the parlor, where she had not long to wait. This time the lady was a very pleasant one, and although she declined to buy the book, she treated the little canvasser kindly.

"If at first you don't succeed try, try again," rung in Edith's ears, as she boldly tried to gain admittance to the next house. Her success here was no better, and

Edith clenched her small fist, and inwardly declared never again would she ring another bell, and subject herself to the torture of presenting a book or any other article to the public. She was in no enviable frame of mind when, an hour later, she entered the pleasant sitting-room of Mrs. Tyler, who had moved from W., and was now living in Brooklyn.

"I am sorry you have had such miserable luck, Edith," said that good lady; "but there are better days coming; trust in the Lord, he will bring you out all right."

"Haven't I trusted Him," said Edith with desperation; "and see what I have come to."

This last remark brought a smile to Mrs. Tyler's face, and Edith, seeing it, burst into a nervous laugh, which almost ended in tears.

Soon after this, she applied for a position in a large store in New York, and to her surprise obtained the place. The store had recently connected a restaurant with its many departments, so that a lady could come there and do shopping all day if she wished, without going outside to get her lunch. It was to fill a place in the restaurant, that Edith was hired, and for her services here she was to receive the liberal sum of five dollars per week. It is true, her car-fare cost her nearly one dollar of this small sum, and her board would take the rest, but it was the best she could do.

This large store employed several hundred girls in different capacities; they were obliged to be on hand the moment the back door to the store was opened, and if

any one was late, they were charged one cent per moment for any such transgression. Entering the rear door, after waiting some moments with a motley crowd at its portals, Edith ascended a long, winding flight of stairs which led to the girls' dressing room. This was a rough, unfinished room, and served for a lunch place as well as a receptacle for outside garments. The girls of this fashionable store, were not permitted to go to their dinner, but were allowed twenty minutes for lunch, which they devoured as rapidly as possible, to be in their places as soon as the short time allotted to them had expired. A lady superintendent was at the head of the female portion of the help ; her name was Beastly, and her nature was worse than her name.

Floor-walkers walked up and down their different departments, to insure order, and detect anything amiss in the clerks. Edith was told to stand behind a counter and wait upon the waiters, and attend, as far as possible, to the people who took their lunch at the counter. For the first two hours in the morning the restaurant was nearly empty of guests, and this time was devoted to setting everything in order. Such a scrubbing and rubbing and rattling of silver ware, Edith had never before witnessed ; but this confusion was nothing to what followed, when the hungry multitude surged in, until every table and all the room at the counter was occupied ; the noise was deafening. Edith wondered if she was herself or some other person ; the space behind her counter was so narrow that two people could hardly pass without tearing each other's clothes. and Edith's large apron

soon had a hole worn through it, in her constant contact with the counter.

There was neither time nor opportunity for these poor girls to eat their dinner, and not a mouthful passed their lips until the crowd gradually subsided, which did not occur before four o'clock in the afternoon, when they were allowed a lunch from the restaurant, and were told to eat it as soon as possible. Edith ate her lunch at the farther end of the room, behind an old show-case; it was necessary for any girl, when eating her portion, not to be seen by any of the guests; so if any one approached Edith's secluded spot she would receive various signals, from others of the help, to get out of sight so often, before her morsel was eaten, she had to hide herself behind, and almost under, the show-case, which made her feel, while engaged in this innocent necessity of life, that she was guilty of some disgraceful thing.

For four days Edith clung bravely to her new calling, and no one but God knew what days of exquisite torture they were. Naturally sensitive and refined, the publicity of this life was next to unbearable.

At the end of the fourth day, Miss Winchester, the floor-walker, sent for her and stated that they thought of placing her in another department. Edith expressed her pleasure at this new arrangement, and as her tired feet were passing by the superintendent's desk, on her way to the dressing-room, she stopped and said to Miss Beastly, "Miss Winchester tells me that you propose to place me in another part of the store, and I am pleased, for I shall like it better than the restaurant."

Miss Beastly gave Edith a scornful glance, as she replied, "Yes; I am going to change you, but not because you are better suited for, or would be better pleased with the change, but because you do not get along at all well; you are stupid, slow, and inefficient."

Edith looked like a hunted deer at bay. What could this woman mean! She had never been called stupid in her life, and never been considered slow. She stood looking at Miss Beastly, for an instant, with a vacant stare, and then, as the injustice of these accusations came seething through her brain, like liquid fire, she turned away without one word; hastily putting on her hat and shawl, she descended the stairs and dashed out into the street.

"What is the matter, Miss Lyton," said a gentle voice close by her side. The speaker was a young girl, employed in the restaurant where Edith had been.

Edith related in a broken voice, often choked by tears, her conversation with Miss Beastly.

"It is shameful," said Edith's friend; "but I can see through the whole of it; it is the work of that meddling old maid, Miss Taylor. She is always making trouble for some one. I would not feel badly if I were you; you are neither slow nor stupid."

Here their ways diverged, and Edith gave her sympathizer a hasty shake of the hand, and they parted to meet no more.

All through that long ride on the horse-cars, Edith's heart was heavy as lead. Was she accursed that she should be so troubled on every hand? When

she had tried with almost superhuman energy to do her best, why did not Heaven recognize the effort and bless her? All was blackness and doubt. She was obliged to cross the Grand street Ferry to reach her friend, Mrs. Worthy, Again she pushed her way through the crowd, and stood, as she had stood so many years before, looking into the dark water. She did not think to-night as she had then, that she would end her wretched life by one mad plunge, but she sadly compared that dreadful hour with this, and almost wished that she had ceased to exist at that time; the long, unsatisfying years that she had lived since then, the weary years which might perchance stretch into the unknown future, made her shudder and grow sick at heart.

CHAPTER XV.

A STRUGGLE.

W. D. SHARP was the wealthy proprietor of a certain high-toned fancy goods store in the city of S. Mr. Sharp was rightly named; few men were possessed of such an untiring ability to pry into the mysteries connected with his own business, to say nothing of his interest in other people's.

If there was one person in the whole world whom Warren Sharp held in profound respect it was himself, and he was not satisfied with esteeming himself, but was

determined that so far as his power extended he would compel the most cringing servitude.

He walked the streets with his head thrown back, and with broad, heavy strides, seemed to be crushing the pavement under his feet, much as he would like to have crushed anything on which he had power to set his heel.

His store was as faultless as a store could be, for Mr. Sharp displayed rare taste in his selection of goods and in his arrangement of them.

His clerks were all ladies, with the exception of one, Mr. Gaul by name, who was his right-hand man, and understood the store and its various contents quite as well as its owner. If Mr. Gaul's life had been unlike his name, up to the time he entered Mr. Sharp's employ, I am sure that after this eventful period of his existence he was, figuratively speaking, well accustomed to the bitterness of both gall and wormwood. It was such a supreme delight for Mr. Sharp to have some one near him on whom he could, at any time, when the turbid stream of his tyrannical nature overflowed, let its bitter waters fall. Almost any man but Mr. Gaul would have told Mr. Sharp, in the midst of his unreasonable fury, to go to a very warm place; and thus, in the course of profanity and violence, their business relations would have come to a sudden close.

Mr. Gaul was well paid for his forbearance, and so he tightly shut his teeth until each storm subsided, thinking all the time that discretion was the better part of valor; so he pocketed Mr. Sharp's shining dollars,—

the price of cringing to a tyrant, — and swallowed, as best he could, the insults heaped upon him.

Mr. Sharp would have preferred to employ more gentleman clerks, but as most men would not submit to becoming cringing cowards, he was obliged to employ ladies. Sometimes, in fact quite often, a lady would rebel against his authority, and this was always attended with a fearful battle of words, during which combat, Mr. Sharp outstripped the offender both in strength of language and in quantity.

There was just one person in his employ who dared to use almost as strong terms as himself, and who did not hesitate to tell him what she thought of him ; this person was his book-keeper, — Miss Darewell.

Warren Sharp would not have endured what he was obliged to from Miss Darewell, had it been easy for him to fill her place ; he was fully aware of her superior abilities, and feeling fearful that it would be a case of cutting your nose off to spite your face, he allowed the offender to remain.

Thus it was that, with trembling frame and strong misgivings, Edith Lyton accepted a place in W. D. Sharp's store. Edith would never have possessed courage to apply to Mr. Sharp for a place in his employ, for his reputation was well known throughout the city of S., but a kind friend of hers, wishing to do her a favor, went to see Mr. Sharp, and by speaking highly in Edith's praise, obtained the place for her.

Mr. Sharp was in his most affable mood on the morning that Edith commenced her services for him. He

said, "Miss Lyton, I want some one who is universally pleasant to customers ; I noticed, when I first conversed with you, that you possessed a very agreeable manner; this fact led me to hire you." All this and much more Mr. Sharp said on this occasion.

Edith was to receive four dollars per week for the first two months, and then five dollars per week for the three months following. This was small pay, and it was with difficulty that Edith succeeded in getting boarded cheap enough to make her wages cover her expenses ; but at last the place was secured, and Edith found a kind friend and pleasant home with Mrs. Sands. For three weeks after Edith entered W. D. Sharp's employ, everything went smoothly, and that gentleman expressed himself perfectly satisfied with his new clerk. Some of Edith's friends said, "Well, it is perfectly remarkable that you have been in Mr. Sharp's store for three weeks, and thus far escaped his wrath." Others said, "I guess you have woven a spell over him."

But Edith replied. "I do not think it would be possible for any one to charm W. D. Sharp out of his bad temper, and although I have escaped his displeasure thus far, I feel all the time as if I was walking on the verge of a volcano, which might any moment send forth fire and destruction.

Every morning when Edith prepared for her daily work, it was with a silent prayer that she might be kept from this man's furious temper, and every night, as she wended her way home, after working hours were over,

she lifted her heart in thankfulness for God's merciful preservation.

Edith Lyton loved many people, and her affection was returned in full measure by loving hearts. Being naturally possessed of quick sympathies and good judgment, she was on many accounts a most desirable friend.

The inner life of many a poor disheartened soul had been laid bare to her, and the secrets of each and every one were treasured in her heart of hearts, as securely as if the grave had closed over them. But Edith found it impossible to disclose the secrets of her own life to any of these dear ones. Sometimes the tightly-closed door of her heart would open just wide enough to show that, enclosed within its sacred precincts, were bitter trials, grievous to be borne; and then Edith always changed the subject, and her friends remained in ignorance of her heart's secrets. This was not because Edith was so secretive, but it was owing to a certain want of harmony between these people and herself, and she felt that were she to try to make them comprehend the great wants of her nature, its struggles, or its failures, she would be talking in an incomprehensible way to them, so she wisely held her peace.

Years ago there had dawned upon her life a friendship, which seemed, in its purity and harmony, to Edith's visionary eyes, like the perfection of earthly love. Edith had first met this much-loved friend, during her frequent visits to sweet Helen Hammond's sick bed, when their hands had first touched each other in the conventional form of an introduction. Edith felt a thrill

of pleasure she had never experienced before, and when the beautiful brown eyes of Phemie Stedman looked for the first time into her own, she felt that she looked, not upon her outward literal self, but through all this, and deeper, into her very soul; and Edith was not alone in her powerful attraction, for Phemie Stedman felt an uncommon interest in Edith Lyton.

The friendship thus begun, grew until in Edith's heart it had gained gigantic proportions; woven into every thread and fibre of her nature was this strong, passionate love. It is true that one dreadful foreboding fear had stolen some of the sweetness from Edith's otherwise perfect love, and this was the gaunt shadow of a coming time when something should separate her from Phemie Stedman's love.

Phemie laughed at her fears, and kissed away the last shadow of doubt from Edith's brow, saying, as she did so, "Nothing but death, darling, shall ever come between you and me."

Years had passed since then, and Phemie Stedman, who possessed superior talents, had climbed far up the ladder of fame; the works her pen had written had been widely read, and the author of them flattered and caressed by the multitude, until, surrounded by the glitter and din of success, she had carelessly allowed her love for Edith Lyton to wither and die.

When the first knowledge of Phemie's growing indifference slowly dawned upon Edith, it seemed as if her heart must break, and, struggling against these fearful doubts, she hoped against hope that Phemie's

heart was still her own, and, wishing to prove it, like a man at the gambling-table, who finds his fortune nearly melted away, tries, by one grand, desperate effort, to retrieve his losses, by staking his last penny on a game of chance; the game is over, and he staggers forth a ruined man. So Edith only discovered, what she should have known before, that Phemie Stedman's heart and head were full of other things, and that new friends had more than filled her place.

When Edith had first entered W. D. Sharp's store, she had learned of the severe illness of her once idolized friend Phemie; she asked no questions, but, as days passed by, she learned through the idle conversation of various people, that Miss Stedman was better, and was going away from S. to be gone for some months, in the hopes of recovering her health by travel and change.

The day at length arrived when the noted Miss Stedman was to take her departure, and the fact was commented upon freely both in Mr. Sharp's store, and at Mrs. Sand's boarding-house, and poor Edith felt as if she could not bear to hear the name which had once been so full of music to her, and since so full of anguish, mentioned in her presence again; neither could she endure to let her old friend go forth on her uncertain journey without one word from her; so, taking her pen, she wrote a few words hastily, and mailed the letter, thinking that the one for whom it was designed would not receive it until it would be too late for her to attempt an interview, which Edith was far from de-

siring. Unfortunately, clerks are not the mere machines they are supposed to be.

On this eventful day, Edith's mind could not be confined within the narrow limits of Mr. Sharp's store; in vain she tried to narrow her thoughts down to the buttons she was showing to customers, but mingling all unbidden with fringe, lace, ribbons, gloves, and many other articles, was the sad memory of her shattered friendship.

It was well for Edith that the head of this establishment was in New York, buying goods, for nothing ever escaped his eagle eyes, and Edith's preoccupation must have been noticed, and severely reprimanded by W. D. Sharp.

It was towards night now, and the tyrant was expected back at any moment. It had been a dreary day, and as business was not driving, Edith was sent to the lower end of the store to sew buttons on to a sample card. It was a task she had never had before, and Mr. Gaul, taking up one of the cards, told her that she had not done it just right, and kindly showed her the proper way to fasten each button.

Just then a clerk came to Edith and said, "there is a lady up at the glove counter who wishes to see you."

Edith felt as if every drop of blood in her body was slowly turning to ice, as her eyes fell upon her old and much-loved friend.

"I just received your note Edith," she said, "and I could not go away without saying good-by." That word "good-by" sounded in Edith's ears like the "dust

to dust, ashes to ashes" said over an open grave, and starting with a shudder, she said, "No, not good by, Phemie; I don't like that word."

"Well, only good-night, then, little friend."

There were a few other murmuring words, and Phemie bought some gloves, while Edith waited upon her with frozen composure; and then, a warm shake of Edith's icy hand, and Phemie was gone. No! not gone, for in another moment she had turned back once more, and taking Edith's two little cold hands in hers, said, "Good night, — not good-by," and then all seemed blackness to Edith.

She groped her way to the dressing-room, and bathed her numb fingers and chilly face with cold water, and tried to compose herself; and then blessed tears came to her relief. We said blessed tears; they would have been so, but for the fact that Edith was hired body and soul to attend in W. D. Sharp's store, and consequently these tears were accursed.

Taking her place once more in the store, she discovered that D. W. had arrived; in fact it would not take the most indifferent person long to become aware of this fact; for there was a certain feeling which possessed every one in his presence. You often felt him near when you did not see him. He soon gave Edith a searching glance and noticed the traces of tears on her face.

"What is the matter, Miss Lyton," he said blandly; "has any one been abusing you?"

"No sir. I have been feeling badly about something

not connected with the store. I am all over it now," she said with a bright smile.

After considering the subject, W. D. Sharp decided that Edith had no right to let anything outside of his store trouble her, and he begun to feel that she had infringed on his rights by so doing.

On the following day, as Edith was selling a blue veil to a lady, Mr. Sharp came up to her, and giving one of his most withering looks he commenced hostilities with, "Miss Lyton, I want you to understand that while you are in my employ you must not allow any personal matter to interfere with my business."

Edith was doing her best when her employer pounced upon her. She did not make him any reply, and bit her lips until the blood came, trying to keep down her feelings. The lady who was her customer at the moment, gave her a look of intense sympathy, and this nearly made her break down.

It was noon at last, and she could cry ; and she did cry, until she thought she never should be able to go back to Sharp's store in the afternoon ; but some kind friend cheered her up, and rubbed her inflamed eyes with magnesia, so that she made quite a respectable appearance.

This opening skirmish was the beginning of war, if a combat fought by one can be called a warfare.

Edith stood almost as much in terror of W. D. Sharp as she would of a Bengal tiger. From this time forth he lost no opportunity to rave at her, and always took the time when she had a customer.

One day a lady came up to Edith with a tiny scrap of farmer's satin, and said she would like to get something like it if possible. Edith showed her the different pieces of farmer's satin, and the lady decided that one of them was an exact match, so she said she would take two yards and a half. Edith quickly measured it off, and after paying for it the lady departed.

In the afternoon of the same day the sharp tones of W. D.'s voice sounded through the store, as he screamed, "Miss Lyton, did you sell this lady some farmer's satin?"

"Yes sir," said Edith.

"Well, did you sell it for green?"

"No sir. I sold it to match a small piece she had in her hand; I showed her all that we had and she matched it herself."

"What right had she to match it?" he yelled. "I hire my clerks to do that, did you not know that there was no color in the store but black?"

"No, sir, I did not," said Edith.

"Well it's your business to know it; that is what I pay you for; take the lady down to the farmer's satins, and see if the piece of brown we have will match her sample."

Edith did as she was requested, but of course brown and green are more different than a dark invisible green and black; so the brown would not answer. Walking back through the long store, to where W. D. stood she said, with a desperate effort, "the brown does not match; what shall I do?"

"Pay her back her money," he said ; "all through your stupidity."

For three weary months Edith remained here, bearing more than she would have believed it possible for her to endure. Not only did her soul revolt against the injustice heaped upon herself, but she was daily made indignant at the gross wrongs she had to witness to others. One stormy day, the clerks were vainly trying to busy themselves,—for W. D. Sharp did not like to see any one idle, even if there was nothing to do ; so the girls would search for broken boxes and mend them, and for loose buttons to sew on to cards ; and, in fact, for anything that could give them the appearance of industry. On such days as this, they could sit down to their work ; there was no rule to prevent the clerks from sitting down, for W. D. Sharp considered himself a most humane man ; and therefore he did not say to his clerks, "You are expected to stand all day long, whether you have any one to wait on or not ;" but he meant it all the same ; and if a weary girl dropped on to a stool during the day, he would give her a demoniac look, which meant, "how dare you take a seat during the busy part of the day!"

As evening approached, these poor, tired slaves could rest their weary limbs on the edge of an open drawer, and be ready to spring if occasion required.

On this particular day of which we write, there was a storm outside and a worse one within. Mr. Sharp and his bookkeeper were having one of their old-fashioned rows. W. D. looked like a crazy man, as he threw his

arms up in the air, telling her that "he hired her to do something, but that she was a lazy thing, and sat perched on the high stool at his desk from morning until night, doing nothing."

Miss Darewell was calmly insulting as she said, "I notice I do plenty of things that you never spoke of when you hired me."

"I'll not bear it," screamed W. D.

"You can do as you please," retorted the angry book-keeper.

"It is time you got out of this desk," he said, hitting the stool she sat on at the same moment with his boot.

"I shall leave it to-night at about the same time you do," replied Miss Darewell.

It was a fearful jargon of words and sounds, during which Miss Darewell told him he had been as ugly as his Satanic majesty all day. How W. D. ever swallowed this last remark we cannot imagine, but he did; and at last quietness was restored.

Edith dreaded the next few days, for she knew, from former experience, that on some other poor defenceless head would fall all the pent-up vials of W. D's. wrath. As she was coming to the store next morning she met Miss Grant, a young lady who worked at the same place, and together they pursued their way to the store.

"Some of us poor, unfortunate wretches will have to catch it to-day, Edith," she said.

"Yes; and I feel just as if he was going to seize me as his victim, Grace."

"Well, it may be I, and if so I am prepared for the

worst ; he can't more than kill me, and I have got so I don't mind him as I used to do."

Miss Grant was W. D.'s special scape goat, and Edith had frequently heard him talk fearfully to her.

"I don't see how you can feel so unconcerned Grace," she said.

Just then the store was reached, and with silence they entered its dreadful precincts. Edith said "good morning Mr. Sharp ;" but that gentleman answered only with a growl. Edith saw with dismay, as she came out of the dressing room, that W. D. was standing behind her counter, and instinctively she felt that her time had come. With trembling fingers she began to uncover the big boxes of special bargains which stood on the counter. In this trying moment she had forgotten to dust the counter and in an instant W. D. opened fire.

"Do you uncover goods before your dusting is done, Miss Lyton ?" he said in a furious tone of voice.

Edith's voice trembled slightly, as she answered, "No, sir. I thought —"

"What right had you to think ; you know you are always expected to dust everything on the counter, and take out all the boxes on the lower shelf, and dust them, before uncovering anything," and here the enormity of her offence gained such dire proportions in his brain, that he almost danced up and down as he continued, "Why Miss Lyton, if you can't work for my interest I had better fill your place with some one who can ; do you hear ?"

"Yes sir," said Edith in a trembling voice. But W. D. did not propose to stop yet, he had power over a quivering, sensitive piece of flesh and blood and he was determined to have full satisfaction. So he slashed to the right and left with his tongue which was keener than any two-edged sword.

At last he said again, "I will have some one in your place who pleases me, do you understand?"

"I understand, Mr. Sharp, but I don't think such a person exists," replied Edith.

This was unexpected. "I tell you Miss Lyton that I will not be answered back, there is just one person in this store who dares to do it and I won't have two."

"You can do just as you please," said Edith.

"Perhaps I had best go to the desk and settle your account Miss Lyton."

"Certainly you had, if I don't suit you."

Mr. Sharp had not expected this, for he liked Edith and so did his customers; he felt ill natured, and thought to spite his bad temper on her; he hesitated a moment, but he could not bring his mind to relent, and Edith would have died before she would have begged pardon of a man who had goaded her on to the verge of desperation.

So W. D. went to his desk and made out her account, throwing the money at her, so that a portion of it rolled on to the floor. She gathered together the hardly-won pelf, and without giving W. D. a "thank-you" for the money he had so rudely paid her, she left his store

where she had been so wretched, and had cringed again and again to a low tyrant.

"Whether I sink or swim, live or die, I am glad I am free from the degrading servitude that man imposes on all who work for him." These were her reflections, as she walked away from the place which had long been a hateful one to her.

CHAPTER XVI.

SIMON FLINT.

EDITH next learned of a place in the city of B., and lost no time in addressing a letter to Simon Flint, the proprietor of a large confectionery establishment there.

She received a prompt reply, stating he was much pleased with the tone of her letter, and that he would give her employment provided they could make terms satisfactory. He wrote, "I can get plenty of good help for three and four dollars per week."

Edith's first thought was the uselessness of answering the letter, as the small pay would not warrant her a living; but on second consideration, she decided to write once more, to say how impossible it would be to work for four dollars a week, but that she would gladly

come for one dollar per day. "I know," she added, "it is very poor taste to speak in praise of one's self, but as I have no one to speak for me, I will say that, in a business like yours, it is a great advantage to possess honesty in your employees. I can sincerely say that during the number of years I worked for Carter & Co. in this city, I never took one pound of candy without paying for it."

This last recommendation proved to be irresistible to Simon Flint, so he at once wrote her a letter offering her five dollars, which was more than he was paying any girl in his manufactory.

Edith accepted the situation, and at once packed her trunk and prepared herself for a new field of labor.

It was with much difficulty that she secured a boarding-place, from the fact that her salary was so small the necessity for something cheap and respectable made the task a difficult one. This obstacle overcome, she started for an interview with Simon Flint.

The store of which this gentleman was sole proprietor was a long one, and at its extreme lower end was a black walnut railing, which enclosed a corner and little more, devoted to the uses of an office; two desks were in this carpeted enclosure, one smaller than the other, at which sat a lady, busily writing; her hair was red, but appeared to have been oiled profusely, to detract, if possible, from its brilliant hue. Her teeth protruded slightly, and it was with an effort that she could close her lips; consequently, her mouth was half open, disclosing a set of very large teeth, which looked not unlike grave-

stones. She was small in stature, not measuring five feet, and exceedingly slight, almost angular, in proportions. Such was Simon Flint's bookkeeper and general assistant. He was seated in a chair, with both hands in his pockets, and his feet on the railing; he seemed to be looking through time and space with a pair of very black eyes. So absorbed was he in his reflections, that he did not notice Edith as she approached him, and waited respectfully for him to speak.

After a moment she said, "Is Mr. Flint in?"

The black eyes turned slowly in the direction of her voice, as he said, in a very husky tone, "my name is Flint."

"I am Miss Lyton, Mr. Flint."

"I am happy to meet you, Miss Lyton," he quickly replied, springing to his feet, and reaching out his hand. After a few hasty inquiries concerning her boarding-place, and a hurried glance at Edith's recommendations, it was decided that she should commence work on the following day.

The help of Flint's establishment were all obliged to ride on an elevator to the sixth story of the building, where the candy was made, and Edith felt almost lost in the crowd which roughly jostled each other, as they sprang upon the freight elevator which conveyed them to their destination. Coarse jokes and boisterous laughter between the men and women, made her feel ashamed of her surroundings.

The manufactory was one immense room, stretching the entire length and breadth of the building, without

one partition, with the exception of a rudely constructed dressing-room, where the girls hung their outside garments, and a small starch-drying room, in which an Italian made gum drops, and many other French candies. The dressing-room was located where there had once been a flight of stairs, and rough boards, far too slender to bear the weight of ten or eleven girls, composed the floor; the old banisters still remained, and to these a partition of unpainted boards was nailed; it boasted no roof, nor did it need one. The door was old, and might have belonged to some barn in its more prosperous days, for it had been made to roll back and forth on rollers; but as these were out of order, the dressing-room door was a useless ornament. The room contained no mirror, and its occupants were obliged to appeal to each other to settle the momentous question of personal appearance.

Edith had been hired to work in the packing department; this consisted in weighing candy all day, and packing it in wooden boxes containing twenty-five pounds each. Her first day was a dreadful one, and long before night her hands were bleeding, with their rough contact with gritty sugar and hard candy; but it was not her hands which gave her the most trouble, for her whole frame, unaccustomed as she was to lifting, trembled with weariness and quivered with pain. There was one bright spot in that weary day, which came in the shape of a fair young girl, Belle Fowler by name. She was as much out of place in this rough spot as Edith. Belle was a jewel of rare value, but the setting

to her life was what brass would be to pearls, or copper to diamonds. They each brought their dinners, and so, on this, Edith's first day, Belle gently introduced herself, and they took dinner together.

There was a poor, miserable specimen of a cat belonging to this place, and above the roar of machinery and conflicting noises, Edith could hear the pitiful cry of puss. As Belle and Edith were eating their lunch the cat's cry was still more distinct, for the machinery was still now, and the large room almost empty.

"She cries like that all the time, and she is as wild as can be," said Belle.

"Let us try and tame her," said Edith; "it will be so nice for you and I to have a pet." And away Edith flew on her benevolent mission.

At first kitty refused to make friends, but after repeated attempts, the little black and white cat became as tame as they could desire, and a very pretty picture she made, sitting up so straight, with her black tail curled around her white feet, taking dinner with them. Edith named her "Capitola," a name Belle and herself easily remembered but not so with Tommy Rag, who could never think of it, but would constantly call her "Capola," or "what's her name."

This Tommy Rag was a great feature in this establishment, he was the striker for the man who made stick candy, and a comical personage was Mr. Rag, as the girls used to call him. He was but little above four feet, his head was large and square, and badly compared with his little compact body. His working garb con-

sisted of a very ragged pair of brick-colored overalls, while his woollen undershirt was tattered and torn ; but the most conspicuous thing was his feet, encased in a pair of shoes which were the cast-off property of some six-footer, and made Tommy look as if he had been intended for a tall man, but too much of his length of limb had been wasted in bending his feet in the wrong place.

Tommy was not a beautiful character, but a nuisance in many ways ; sometimes when Edith's back was turned, her ears would catch the sound of a volume of profanity such as one seldom hears in a lifetime, and she could hardly credit her senses when she knew it proceeded from that little bunch of pomposity ; and so he was one of the most unpleasant companions of her daily toil.


The work which Simon Flint expected his girls in the packing-room to do, was unsuitable for any one but a man to perform, and Edith realized every day that if she long continued this unreasonable exertion, it would be at the expense of her health. But what should she do ? Many of her friends, or those professing to be, had made the most unkind remarks in connection with the frequent changes she had made in business, since she left the employ of Carter & Co. ; it is true, she was under no obligation to these same people, but nevertheless their criticisms had deeply grieved her. She had refused one place where she would be obliged to rise at five in the morning and remain standing all day, not leaving the store even for her meals, until nine in the

evening for one week, and the next, and every alternate one, she was to be in this store by seven, never leaving until the restaurant closed, — sometimes eleven, twelve, or one o'clock at night; and then she was to sleep in the room with some half a dozen Irish girls who attended in the restaurant. Because Edith had dared to refuse such a place as this, people had said, "Well, I guess she does not want to work very much, or she would be glad enough to get a place like that, for three dollars a week and her board," and they had predicted, before she died she might be very glad to work harder for much less pay.

Mr. Flint used to take a daily survey of his manufacturing department, at which time he walked through the large room with a long, swinging gait, his head bent forward, and both hands under his coat-tails, causing them to assume a horizontal position. Sometimes he would stop by Edith's side, and make a few remarks, but never did he linger after the slight frame and red hair of his book-keeper came in sight. There was something strange, almost ridiculous, in the power this little, withered specimen of humanity exercised over Simon Flint. He was a man who feared neither God nor the devil, but one glance from this woman was sufficient to bend him to her will, and if she conceived a dislike for any of the employees, their doom was sealed from that moment. She delighted in exercising her power, and it was really laughable to see the amount of cringing there was done in Flint's establishment; not to Flint, but to the power behind him, who controlled, in full measure

all the business interests of the place. Miss Damon, for this was her name, had decided from the moment Edith first shook hands with Mr. Flint, on the day she introduced herself, that he had been too cordial to her, a stranger; and, furthermore, that he had looked thoroughly pleased with Miss Lyton's personal appearance, and she had settled the question in her own mind at once, that Edith's stay in this place should be a short one.

There are laws for almost every condition of existence, — to prevent cruelty to animals and protect the rights of every living thing; but alas! there are none to interfere with the injustice and cruelty dealt out to many a woman who lives in this fair land of equal rights and privileges! Many a girl is compelled to stand through long, continuous hours, who, after years of this unnatural servitude, sinks forgotten into an untimely grave; or, worse still, lives on through hopeless years of suffering! What cared Simon Flint that the girls employed by him were lifting, every day of their lives, burdens which were only fit for strong arms to carry; he could hire these girls for almost nothing, and when they were worn out, there was a hungry jostling crowd grasping eagerly for their places; so it only concerned him that they accomplished the work, and at the same time helped to fill his coffers with wealth. Simon Flint is not alone, for, throughout the length and breadth of our land, the despairing cry of thousands of perishing women mingles in the din of rapidly accumulating gold, and curses him, who for the sake of self-aggrandizement, is willing to



wring out the last drop of heart's blood from the suffering multitude !

Mr. Marvel, the engineer in this large building, was every inch a true and noble man,— head and shoulders above most who bear the form of manliness, but lack its soul. In many an unobtrusive way he showed acts of kindness to Edith and Belle, and many a pleasant 'noon did they spend in the cheerful room adjoining the engine-room. He was very fond of pets, and had a little gray kitten, with which the girls never tired of playing. "Baby Marvel," they called her, and with a red ribbon, on which hung a tiny bell, around her little neck, it made a very pretty picture ; it would play with its tail and scratch and bite with all the liberty a kitten ever possessed.

Two months had passed and Edith asked for a few days' absence to visit her old friend, Mrs. Worthy, of New York. Her request was granted and she felt like a bird let out of its prison, when she found herself once more in the cars bound for more congenial surroundings. The week quickly passed, however, and Edith again returned to Mr. Flint's store, but not to work, for he informed her that he had filled her place with another girl, who was better suited for the rough work he required ; "but," said he, "I think I can get you the right kind of a place. I have a friend, who wants a lady to tend a confectionery counter. I will write to him at once concerning you."

Edith waited for one week, hoping to hear something definite from this place, but failing in this, she left word

for Mr. Flint to communicate with her as soon as he should hear, and Edith bade Belle Fowler good-by. Poor Belle! her face looked almost hopeless, as she parted from her new friend, and again Edith turned her back on a most unsatisfactory experience. It was some time before she heard from Mr. Flint, and then it was only a short reply to a letter she had sent him, telling her that his friend had filled the place before receiving his letter. Mrs. Waymouth, the lady with whom Edith boarded, was always doing some little thing to help her, and every kind word, every gentle action was fully appreciated by Edith. "Every cloud has its silver lining," thought she, and Mrs. Waymouth and Belle Fowler are the bright lining to the otherwise black cloud which overshadowed my life while working for Mr. Flint.

CHAPTER XVII.

GILDED CLOUDS.

AFTER Edith received the first letter from her step-mother she experienced never failing delight in the correspondence which followed. After a little time she received a long letter from her brother Henry, who had consecrated his life to the church. He wrote, "Had I remained in the world, dear sister, I might have helped you more in worldly things, but I feel assured that my

prayers shall bring down upon your head blessings which no earthly prosperity could give, and I trust the time is not far distant when you shall experience the same faith which enriches my life, and I believe that grace shall triumph and you will yet become a saintly, holy catholic."

Edith read these words with conflicting emotions; it was delightful to feel that she had a brother who loved her and prayed for her; on the other hand it was sad to think that in religious belief they must ever be at variance. The island where Edith's brothers were born was almost exclusively inhabited by firm adherents to the Roman Catholic church, and although Captain Lyton was very far from being a Catholic, he made no interference with the religious belief of his second wife; hence her two children had been brought up, in the strictest sense of the word, Roman Catholic. It was with an almost breaking heart that Henry's mother first learned that her darling boy wished to consecrate his life to the services of the church, as this would necessitate his separation from her; but when she found his heart was fixed on this ennobling self-sacrifice she sought no more to change his purpose, and none but God knew what the struggle of that mother's heart had been. With blinding tears she bent over him, the last night he slept at home, and, smoothing the wavy hair back from his noble forehead, pressed kiss after kiss upon his unconscious face—a face so like one she had worshipped in other days; he was her first born, and with all a mother's fondness she had dreamed and

planned for that young life, and how differently had she imagined his future! She had seen him grow to manhood the support and comfort of her declining years, and now, with the fresh dew of childhood still upon him, with the fair flowers of earthly pleasure yet ungathered, he was to devote his life—not a few years, but the whole of life, to a consecrated existence; when she should look upon that same dear face again, if ever, he would not be her beardless boy, but a man with cleanly shaven face, wearing the garb of his sacred calling. It was a glorious calling, and she upbraided herself that she could for one moment, in her mother's heart, treasure one object above her love for Christ and his Holy Church. So when they parted she smiled through her thickly falling tears as she pressed him in one long, long, lingering embrace, and bade him "God speed." After Henry had departed from the island of his birth for the distant monastery in Holland, where he was to be educated for this divine mission, Mrs. Lyton and Eugene led a very quiet life, unbroken by any startling event; and they were almost wild with delight when a gentleman, at the request of Edith's friend, had sought them, and communicated the little he knew concerning the unknown daughter and sister. With great anxiety they had waited for her first letter, and when at last it came, they were jubilant with joy; other letters followed, and after a while, her picture. With what deep interest they examined this shadow of the face of one, who although unknown by a personal acquaintance, was still

united to them by the most endearing ties. Mrs. Lyton did not possess a picture of her husband, and it had been the source of many a deeply-felt regret that Eugene had never seen his father ; but soon after the correspondence between Edith and her unknown relatives commenced, Mrs. Lyton ascertained that Edith possessed a good picture of her husband ; it was a very small one and was contained in a locket, the gift of her father. As soon as possible she went to an artist and had this little picture copied, and sent the copy to her friends, Mrs. Lyton and Eugene uncovered this precious picture from its many wrappings, with almost reverent feelings, and upon placing it in a good light they gazed long upon the dear, dear face.

"I am so glad," said Eugene softly, "that I know how my father looked ; I have often imagined his face, but this is almost the reality—is it not mamma?"

"Yes, Eugene, it is very like him ; the grave cannot rob me of his face any longer, for while I have this picture to look upon I shall almost feel your father is with us."

Two years had passed since Edith had received the first letter from her distant friends, and in each letter Edith had received, they had expressed a great anxiety to have her visit them, or, better still, tried to prevail upon her to turn her back upon her native land, and adopt their little island for her future abiding-place. Edith had given them a slight account of W. D. Sharp and his treatment of her, and so Eugene wrote :

MY DEAREST SISTER. — Do not stay in the States any longer, compelled to endure the repeated insults of any and every commoner, but come to us and we will shield you and love you always, and if dear mamma should be taken from me, I shall then have a sister to love who will also love me."

Thus, in almost every letter did they urge her to come to them. But there were two serious obstacles to prevent this undertaking; first the expense attending it; and second, the great danger of fever, which so many times proved fatal in the acclimation of foreigners.

When Edith was thrust out from the employ of Simon Flint she returned to her friend Mrs. Worthy, remaining there two months. One day as she was carelessly looking through the advertisements in the Herald her eyes fell upon the glaring figures \$15,000, \$8,000, \$5,000, \$2,500, principal prizes in the next great drawing of the Kentucky State Lottery, now is your chance to make a fortune; \$15,000 for one dollar.

Edith read the tempting advertisement through, and dropping the paper, she quickly arrayed herself in hat and shawl saying to Mrs. Worthy, "I am going out a little way, will be back soon."

"I know I shall lose it, thought Edith; every one does who invests: but desperate diseases need desperate remedies. My case is a desperate one. If I win it will lift me out of my present misfortunes; if I lose, it will neither 'make nor break.'"

The office to which she directed her steps was soon

reached, and entering it, she asked the bald-headed man who came forward, for one ticket in the Kentucky Lottery. A number of tickets were placed before her, and quickly selecting one without looking at the number, she departed. The glaring figures "79,863" met her eye, as she vouchsafed a look at her treasure before placing it securely in her pocket-book.

The few days preceding the publishing of the list of prizes drawn passed away, and on the morning when this list was to appear, Edith lost no time in securing a paper, and seating herself on Mrs. Worthy's front door-steps, she proceeded to read unmolested the long list before her; at length her eye falls on the list beginning with sevens, and several numbers are read when, can she believe her senses! here is the very one she bought, 79,863 has drawn the sum of \$1,000. Edith had to pinch herself to be sure that this person sitting on the door-steps, with eyes fixed unwinkingly on that number, is herself. She could not keep her good fortune a secret very long, and bounding up Mrs. Worthy's stairs, two at a time, she launched into the subject with such vehemence, that good Mrs. Worthy, not clearly understanding the situation for a moment, thought Edith must be crazy. But when the truth fully dawned upon her, she rejoiced almost as enthusiastically as Edith. As soon as the money was really in her possession, she decided to go to the West Indies, and spend the coming winter. It was now August, and she did not dare to risk the climate of the tropics until November; so the

remaining portion of this time was spent with different friends.

Edith, relieved from the pressing anxieties which had so long threatened her destruction, was almost like the Edith of long ago. She sung once more with that same joyous ring her voice was wont to have, before such dark trouble settled over her life ; in fact, she seemed so full of joy and gladness, that from the overflowing fountains of her existence, she sent streams of blessedness in all directions. There was not one little unloved, uncared-for child, who came within her reach, but went away gladdened by some kind word or gentle action. The friends, who had loved her through all the dark trials of her life, could hardly believe she could hold a dearer spot in their hearts ; but so it was ; they had loved then all there was to love, as loving hearts always do ; but this little ray of sunshine falling into Edith Lyton's life, was bringing into action some of the richest, sweetest elements of her nature. It has been said, and truthfully, too, that no plant can perfectly develop without God's beautiful sunshine ; so with Edith's life ! Since she had wept with uncontrollable anguish over all that remained of her mother, she had groped through much of her life in the dark, with only the memory of her mother's love to light her weary pathway. One thousand dollars was a small sum of money, but it was enough for her present necessities and afforded her the opportunity to visit those who were near and dear, through the strongest ties of marriage and blood.

At length cold, dreary November arrived, and the day



for Edith's departure also. Mrs. Worthy and her brother Henry, together with many other friends of Edith's, went down the harbor with her, returning on a tug. Her friends never seemed half so dear to her before, and many wet eyes were in the little band when the last good-bys were spoken, and Edith stood waving her handkerchief as they rapidly disappeared from her.

One week on the broad blue sea, tossing and rocking in its gigantic arms. One week of sadness and joy, — regret for the dear ones left behind, — joy at the thought of being united for the first time in her life with her dear brother and his loving mother. The cry of land is always an exciting one to the sailors and passengers. This welcome sound was heard by Edith before she had arisen in the morning. Quick as the words "Land ahead!" reached her ears, she sprang from her berth, and, rapidly dressing, went on deck, where for hours she watched the little green patches of land which they passed on their way to the Island for which they were bound.

At last the peaceful waters of the harbor are reached, and the tall mountains once more throw green shadows on the water below, as they used to do when Edith's childish eyes dwelt admiringly upon them. The air is heavy with the perfume of orange groves, and all the varied productions of this rich, tropical clime.

How well Edith remembers this same intoxicating air, making you feel languid to the very tips of your fingers. They are nearing the city now, and its tall spires glisten as the rays of sunshine fall across them, and

looming up in the same lofty places stand Bluebeard's and Blackbeard's castle, superior to the warring elements which have devastated the land o'er which the ancient fortresses look. And then, rising in front of her, in the far distance, is the governor's house, and with loudly-beating heart, and quick, short breathing, she is looking for a glance of her old home. Yes! there it stands, as it stood years ago, overlooking, as it did then, the entire harbor.

Other children play in its dear old rooms and gather flowers from the well-remembered grounds. Edith is a world-worn woman now, and Harry, the playmate of her childhood years, has been a long time in that country where the flowers never wither and the inhabitants are never sick; and above all, dearer and sweeter than any memory of her life, shines out the saintly face of her mother.

"Oh, mother! mother!" was the wild cry of her heart, as her eyes once more fell on the sacred spot where that dear life expired. No, not expired; for she still lives; and from the blessedness of heaven's perfect rest and happiness, she still bends, with a more than mother's love, o'er the precious child she left in this dark world, so long ago.

Edith's rapt reflections were interrupted, as a small boat neared the side of the steamer, and after the usual salutation she heard a voice from the boat say, "Have you a lady passenger on board by the name of Lyton?"

Edith did not hear the answer, for hot blood flowed like streams of lava to her brain, and then receding,

left her cold as ice. In another moment a pair of strong arms were around her, and a gentle, almost boyish voice was saying, "You are very welcome to our hearts and home, my sister."

Soon after this the steamer came to anchor, and Edith, escorted by Eugene, was conveyed in a small boat to the shore. A short walk brought them to the cottage, where Eugene's mother was awaiting their coming with strange emotion.

The cottage, was a little gem of a house ; the thickly clustering vines, which climbed to the eaves, made it look like a picture, and standing in the door with this framework of leaves and flowers, was Edith's step-mother. She was a tall, graceful lady, with languid black eyes, and threads of silver thickly mingled in her once jetty hair. In an instant Edith was in her arms, and no own mother could have embraced her long-lost darling child more tenderly than Mrs. Lyton. "God bless you, darling," she said. "I love you for your father's sake, and more because you look at me with a pair of eyes his very own in color and expression."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER.

THE time passed pleasantly to Edith for the next few weeks. Her mother was a lovely woman, and untiring

in her efforts to make Edith happy. Mrs. Lyton had always longed for a daughter, and this gentle girl, with her sweet ways, seemed to fill a place in her heart which had hitherto been empty, and Eugene seemed perfectly happy in this new experience. Together they climbed to the lofty spot, where Bluebeard's castle stood, and with slow and careful footsteps mounted its crumbling stairs, so that from its summit they could view the ocean and surrounding country ; and Edith picked some tiny flowers, which grew near its ancient walls, that she might press them and send to distant friends.

One day, soon after Edith's arrival, she took a walk unaccompanied by Eugene, directing her footsteps up the hill on which her old home stood. The well-remembered house was soon reached, and, seized by an irresistible influence, she ascended the broad stone stairs and rung the bell.

A little girl answered the summons, and, opening the big door a crack, looked shyly out through a mass of tangled ringlets.

"Is your mamma at home?" said Edith ; but, without answering the question, the child bounded in pursuit of her mother. In another moment she appeared with her mother by her side.

"I trust you will excuse me, madam, for this intrusion," said Edith ; "when I tell you this house was once my home. My mother died here, and I feel such a strong desire to stand once more in the same room where she breathed her last."

The lady replied in a gentle voice, "It is no intrusion ;

come right in, and go all over the house if you wish, just as if it were your own."

Edith thanked her, and stepped once again upon the old stone balcony, which had been the delight of her childish days; again she leaned over its massive wall, and looked down into the yard. The old orange-tree was gone, and a little one, not half as large, grew in its place. The fountain still sent forth refreshing streams of water, but it no longer flowed from the mouth of the marble deer, as it used to do when Edith last beheld it; two little marble figures, representing a boy and girl standing under an umbrella, had replaced the dying stag. The oleander hedge is overgrown, and hides completely the dusty street. The grand old harbor looks almost the same as when Edith last gazed upon it from this very spot. Again she stood in the parlor, and recognized the old chandelier, with its brilliant pendants, as the only familiar object. Reverently crossing the threshold, she stood again within the room where she had taken the last look of the confined form of her mother. Again the awful hush of death seemed to be in the room, and in her imagination she seemed to see that sweet face she had worshipped so in life, sleeping peacefully in its death slumber; she seemed to hear the agonized cry of the motherless girl, who had clung so pitifully to that still form, begging for just one word, one single caress. In a few short moments she had lived over her childhood, and could hardly realize that the child of whom she dreamed was identical with her-

self. Thanking the lady kindly for allowing her to enter once more a spot so sacred to her, she departed.

Eugene accompanied her to the cemetery, where their father and mother were buried. Edith proposed carrying the loveliest flowers they could procure, and they literally covered those two graves with a profusion of these fragrant tributes of affection. Long Edith lingered in a spot which she so oftentimes had longed to visit; a simple shaft of marble marked her mother's resting-place, and under the name and age were these few lines, —

“ Weep not for her, there is no cause for woe
But rather nerve the spirit, that it walk
Unshrinking o'er the thorny paths below,
And from earth's low defilements keep thee back;
So when a few fleet, severing years have flown,
She'll meet thee at Heaven's gate and lead thee on.”

These beautiful words seemed to fill Edith's heart with peace, and she smiled sweetly as she clipped the tall grass from the mound with the large shears she had brought for that purpose, and as she worked she softly repeated,

“ So when a few short severing years have flown,
She'll meet thee at Heaven's gate and lead thee on.”

“ Do you like those words, Edith ? ” said Eugene.

“ Very much,” Edith replied.

“ My mamma selected them when papa bought the stone.”

"If she had known my mother well she could not have found anything more appropriate," said Edith.

"Mamma says that papa made that same remark at the time she gave them to him."

Captain Lyton's grave was marked by a broken column, and the simple words, "Rest in peace," were carved under the name. The two graves looked very beautiful as Eugene and Edith gave them one last glance. Edith's artistic fingers had blended colors so harmoniously, that these lonely graves seemed to rejoice in their own loveliness.

One day, as Edith and Mrs. Lyton were quietly spending an afternoon together, Eugene suddenly entered the room, saying, as he did so, "Here is a letter of importance for Edith; it says, 'Please forward,' on the envelope. So I ran right up to the house with it as soon as received." Edith took the letter, and quickly opened it. It was from Mrs. Worthy, and read,—

DEAR EDITH,—What was my surprise this morning, when running my eye through the personals, of the "Herald," to discover your name. I enclose the identical slip of paper which I, at once, cut out. I then went as quickly as possible to my brother Henry and asked him to go and see the parties, who advertise for you, as the address was Berkelay street. I waited with almost uncontrollable anxiety until Henry's welcome face appeared; he entered the room and threw his hat up to the ceiling, saying, as he did so, "Three cheers for

Edith Lyton ; she is an heiress." I will not stop to tell you all we did or said but will hurry on to facts. It seems that Philip Burton had an aunt, Jane Hunt by name, — perhaps you have heard of her, — she was a very eccentric old woman and very rich withal. At the time Philip Burton died, she saw you for the first and only time. It seems she must have been favorably impressed with you, for when she died, some few weeks since, it was found that in her last will she had left, with the exception of a few legacies to distant relatives, her whole large fortune to you. Her estate is reported worth five hundred thousand dollars ; so you see it is necessary for you to return to us at once, and we are not sorry ! Just think of it Edith ! here are all your day-dreams realized. God bless you and help you to make a wise use of the rich gift he has bestowed upon you. Hoping to see you very soon, I am as ever,

Your friend,

J. A. WORTHY.

It would be impossible to describe the scene which followed, — the hasty questions and the hurried conversation. Finally Edith said, I must have opportunity to think for a little time. I am going out for a walk, and will soon return my own identical self again. Seeking a lonely path, she followed its windings until it brought her to the cemetery. Quickly entering its massive walls, she sought her mother's grave, and kneeling beside the grassy mound, she lifted her heart in prayer, and thanking God for all his blessings, she thanked Him, from the

depths of her full heart, for all the trials of her life, for its bitterest disappointments ; and called her mother's spirit to witness that, out of the bitter experiences through which she had passed, had come her power to shed blessedness on the great suffering world of humanity. She prayed most earnestly that God would keep her from all selfishness, and help her to feel continually her dependence upon Him for guidance in the right use of the money He had sent her. Arising from her knees she felt calm and peaceful, and as she leaned against her mother's grave-stone, trying to impress upon her memory each little sprout and twig, it seemed as if her mother's spirit came very near to her, and touched, with angel fingers, her feverish brow. The influence was a soothing one and it did not leave her as she retraced her footsteps.

The first steamer sailed during the next week and Eugene and his mother almost regretted the good fortune which compelled Edith to leave them.

"You and Eugene shall never want for anything now which money can procure, mamma," said Edith, as she parted from her step-mother's warm embrace ; "and if I live, I shall come and see you again."

Eugene bade her an affectionate good-by, and his voice trembled as he said, "I shall be very lonely without my little sister."

Edith comforted him as best she could and was rewarded by seeing an almost cheerful expression on his boyish face, as he sprung into the little boat which was to take him ashore.

When Edith reached New York, she found a large amount of business awaiting her. She was the wealthy Miss Lyton now, and she laughingly compared the bowing attentions of her lawyer, with the pompous manner of the man who secured her divorce so long ago. In all the walks of life this difference was painfully apparent, and she turned away in disgust from the greedy multitude who courted her wealth, to the few tried and true friends who had stood by her through the darkest hours of her life.

"Mrs. Worthy," said Edith, "you shall never do another day's work."

"Well," said Mrs. Worthy, "if I am not to work what are you to do with me?"

"You are to have a good time all the rest of your days, and help me spend my money wisely. You have always wanted a cozy little home," Edith continued, "with beautiful green grass and a place for flowers, now you shall have it, and a horse to drive; and O, I shall not tell you all because, I want to surprise you."

Mrs. Worthy laughed with the tears in her eyes, as she said, "Edith you are thinking of every one else. I should like to know what Edith Lyton is to have?"

"Why, Mrs. Worthy, I am to be the happiest little mortal in the world; do you not know that it is more blessed to give than to receive?"

Edith's old friend Belle Granger, the companion of her life in the chocolate-room, had been through severe trials since Edith had separated from her, three years ago. In Philadelphia, as elsewhere, wages had been

reduced to such an extent that only those who were fortunate enough to have home and friends could hope to live on the mere pittance paid. Poor Belle was earning only three dollars and sixty cents a week, and out of this small pittance food, shelter, and clothes for two was to come. When Edith had drawn the thousand dollars in the lottery she had sent Belle one hundred dollars from her little pile ; this gift had long kept the wolf from their door. Belle's mother had been very sick, and much of this little hoard had been spent for medicine, and on the day Edith Lyton entered their humble dwelling, gaunt and wan again stared them in the face. Belle had not heard of Edith's good fortune and supposed her to be in the West Indies at this time, and it was with a scream of wild delight that Belle threw her arms around Edith's neck, kissing her again and again. Mrs. Granger's joy expressed itself in a flood of tears.

"You have had a sad, hard life Mrs. Granger, and Belle, you have borne adversity with much fortitude ; if some really bright, beautiful thing should dawn upon your life, could you bear it ?"

"What do you mean Edith, you have always brought us what little brightness we have had for years, have you something good to tell us to-day ?"

"Yes, dear old Belle, I have ; you are never to go back into the dark cellar where you have passed the last three years of your life ; but I am to buy you a sweet little home, just where you most desire ; you shall furnish it yourself, and I will pay the bills, and you are to have a sufficient income for all your wants ; your dear

mother and you shall yet be as happy as you have been wretched."

"I cannot understand you, Edith; are you building castles as you used to do in the old chocolate-room?" said Belle.

"I don't wonder you ask, Belle, for I forgot to tell you about my good fortune. I am rich, Belle; the sole heiress of an old lady whom I never met but once in my life; so I take this money as a gift from God direct, and with His divine help shall try to use it for His suffering children."

"Then it is really true, I am to have a home? God bless you, darling Edith. I don't believe you have made one plan for yourself; that was always the way, — every one else first, and Edith Lyton last; but I am so happy! Mother, do you understand all that Edith is to do for you and I?" and Belle proceeded to explain their good fortune.

"I have made some plans for myself, Belle. I am to travel all the time for the next two or three years and shall hope to have you for a companion during many a short trip. And thus these two friends talked of the future.

Edith decided to educate, as far as she could, a certain number of orphan girls, who had been left without their natural protectors at the same age as herself. She began with five, and after a few years she was so pleased with the project, that she increased the number to ten. As soon as the education of one or more was completed, the vacancy was filled by others; and many a girl who

was thus fitted for a useful life, blessed Edith Lyton, who had lifted her from the degradation of ignorance, and given her what was far better than money. Not only in this way, but in many other useful streams, did her goodness and wisdom bless those who came within its reach.

A few years after Edith's visit to her mother and step-brother, Mrs. Lyton died, and Eugene, at Edith's earnest request, left the land of his birth for a home in his father's country. He is now a flourishing merchant in New York city. He does not marry, for he says he is waiting to find another woman like his sister Edith, only a few years younger, and until he does he shall remain an old bachelor. Henry Lyton is a much-loved priest in the church of his choice, and like his sister Edith, the poor and lowly bless him wherever he goes ; he is conscious of one grief in his heart and this is the fact that his beloved sister is at variance with him in religious belief, and many a prayer does he offer that she may yet be converted to the true church.

Mrs. Worthy and Edith spend hours together, almost every day, planning for some noble work, or helping each other in its execution.

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